

CHANDAMAMA

JANUARY 1998

Rs. 6.00



Turn to Page 11
for 'The Virago
of Veerpuri'

It's what life is all about.



What you are in life, depends on what you choose. Whether you face every challenge or simply refuse. To lend someone a helping hand, selflessly. To share someone's burden, effortlessly. That's what life is about, really.

Forever India's favourite biscuit. • *The truly, tastier energy food* •



everest/95/PPL/108 R





INDIA'S LARGEST SELLING COMICS DIAMOND COMICS

PRAN'S
RAMAN'S
INLAWS

PRAN'S
SONI SAMPAT
& Beauty Queen

PRAN'S
PINKI
& Uncleji

PRAN'S
BILLOO'S
Samosa

PRAN'S
CHACHA CHAUDHARY
& Snowman

MAHABALI SHAKA &
Enemies of Peace

AGNIPUTRA ABHAY
& Trikaand

LAMBU MOTU
& Lions' Gang

JAMES BOND
-64-

DIAMOND COMICS DIGEST
PHANTOM-74

MANDRAKE-61

JOIN THE DIAMOND BOOK CLUB AND FILL YOUR LIFE WITH FUN, THRILL & LAUGHTER

Just fill in the coupon given below and send it to us along with a Money Order or Postage Stamps worth Rs. 10/-

We shall be offering six books every month. To get a rebate of Rs. 4/- and Free postage (approx. Rs. 7/-) you'll have to order six books at a time in a month. In case these books are not of your choice then you are free to select any six books from the list of 'Diamond Comics' titles and we shall send you the same. But to get these benefits you'll have to order six books at a time.

We'll send you a Choice Card every month. If you like the books offered by us in the Choice Card then you need not send us the card back. In case you do not like the books then you send us the names of atleast 7 books of your choice so that we can send you 6 books of your choice available with us at that time.

Under this scheme, we shall be sending you a V.P. Packet by the 20th of every month.

Yes I would like to become a member of 'DIAMOND BOOK CLUB' and take advantage of the benefits. I have read all your rules and shall abide by these. I promise to accept the V.P. every month.

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____

POST OFFICE _____ PIN CODE _____

I am sending Rs. 10/- by M.O./enclosing Postage Stamps worth Rs. 10/-

My Birth date _____

Note : We shall not enrol you as a member till we receive the membership fee.

NEW AMAR CHITRAKATHA

• Tales of Durga • Gandhari • Lokmanya Tilak • Ashoka • Gopal the juster • Freedom Struggle of India

DIAMOND COMICS PVT. LTD. X-30, OKHLA INDUSTRIAL AREA, PHASE-2, NEW DELHI-110020

महिलाओं की अपनी पत्रिका **शुहलक्ष्मी**






Come. Enter a world of frolic and laughter



A wonderful new world created by Rasna. Here you will meet the mischievous Oranjutan, the giggly Mangose and the tickly Strawbear. Candies which come in the shape of these crazy, fun-loving creatures. Candies you can play with and enjoy their tongue-tingling taste. For just 50 paise each. You can also choose from yet another lip-smacking range of candies in lovable flavours of Rasna: Orange, Mango and Pineapple at an



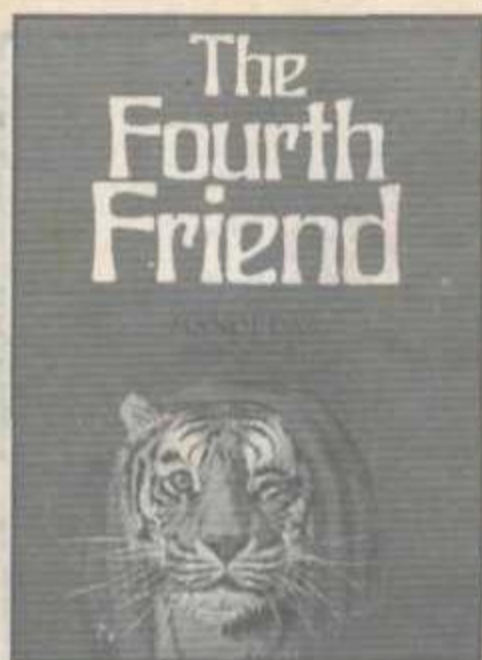
The new world of fun,
with Rasna Candies.



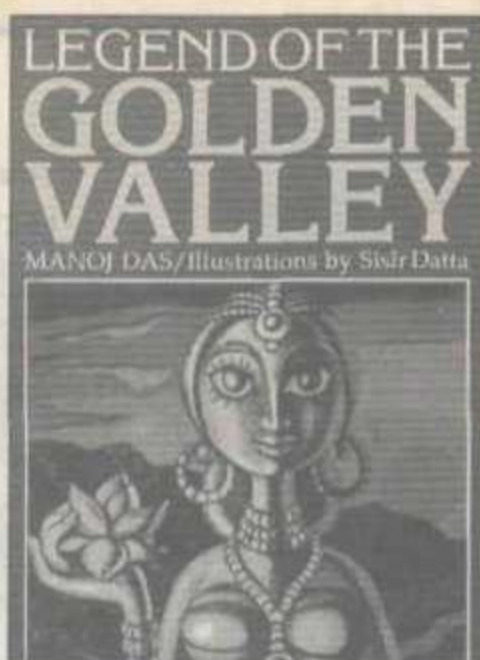
affordable price of 25 paise each.

What's more, try our exciting range of centre-filled Cream Toffees which can bring a smile on your face. So go ahead and celebrate your childhood. With Rasna Candies and Toffees.

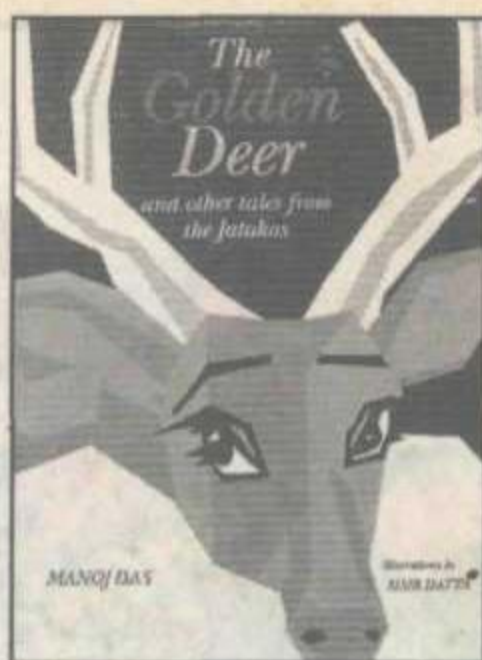
Rasna[®]
CANDIES
&
TOFFEES



Rs. 30/-



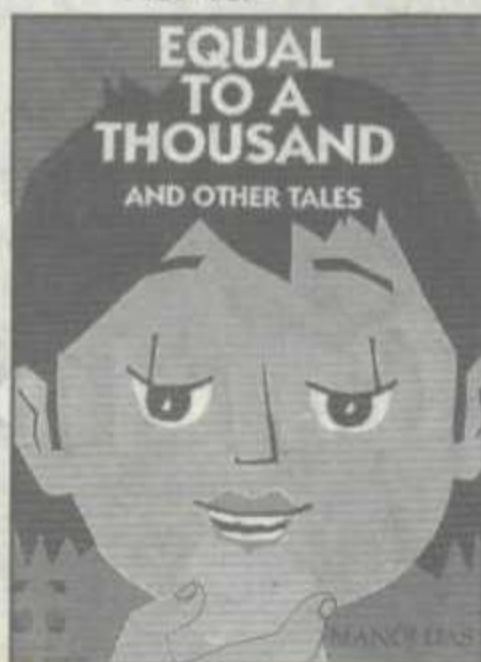
Rs. 40/-



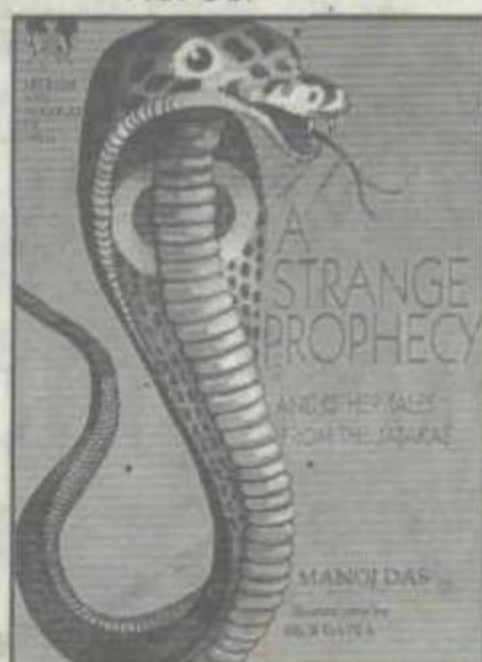
Rs. 30/-



Rs. 30/-



Rs. 25/-

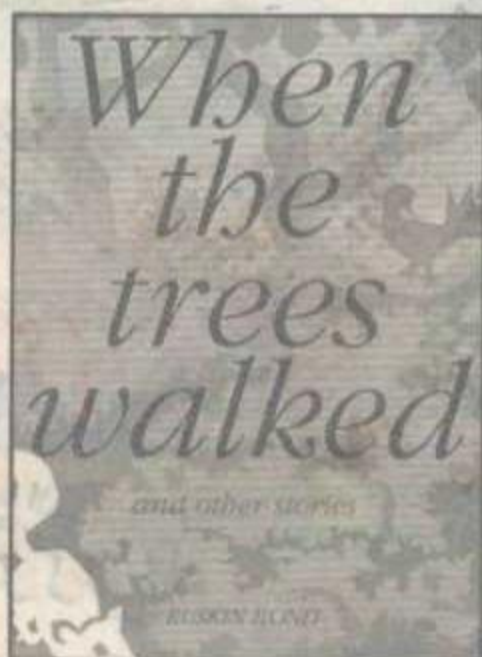


Rs. 30/-

CHANDAMAMA BOOKS ARE ALREADY A LEGEND! THEY OPEN A NEW HORIZON ON THE WORLD OF LITERATURE FOR THE YOUNG

Added to the six titles by **Manoj Das** is the charming seventh—

WHEN THE TREES WALKED
by
the inimitable
story-teller
Ruskin Bond



Rs. 30/-

Among the titles in the process of production are:

STORY OF KRISHNA
STORY OF RAMA
STORY OF BUDDHA



For details, write to:

CHANDAMAMA BOOKS
Chandamama Buildings
Vadapalani, Madras - 600 026.



LECTRA

mummy
you don't have to
wake me up
any more

Finally, a cute lil' personal LECTRA TALKING CLOCK. With an alarm system that will wake you or your child up in **three different ways!** Yes. You could opt for an early morning chirpy rooster sound or set it to belt out cheerful tunes. Your personal LECTRA TALKING CLOCK will also display as well as announce the time!

Available in a range of **exciting colours**, it's the ideal personal clock for every member in the family. So get yours today. In fact, give it to your daughter and get up late tomorrow!

Ideal corporate gift.

Bulk orders undertaken.



MRP Rs. 199/-

LECTRA

SHANKHESHWARA INDUSTRIES
Nonankuppam, Opp. Boat House,
Ariankuppam, Pondicherry - 605 007.
Fax : 0413-48748

HTA. 7980

Distributorship enquiries solicited for unrepresented areas.



CHANDAMAMA

CONTENTS

IN THIS ISSUE

Vol. 28 JANUARY 1998 No. 7

Stories :

A Bad Habit "Caged"	...	Page 10
The Virago Of Veerpuri - 9	...	Page 11
Stories From		
Mahabharata - 39	...	Page 19
Who Was Right ?	...	Page 27
The Royal Secret	...	Page 37
The Saga Of 1857	...	Page 43
Fulfilment Of A Wish	...	Page 52
Pearls From Poetry	...	Page 59

Chandamama Pull-Out :

On The Banks		
Of The Kaveri-1	...	Page 33

Features :

Puzzles	...	Page 18
The Mutiny At Vellore	...	Page 23
A Woman P.M. After 100 Years		
Of Voting Rights	...	Page 41
Chandamama		
Supplement- 111	...	Page 48
Towards Better English	...	Page 51
News Flash	...	Page 57
Sports Snippets	...	Page 63
Let Us Know	...	Page 65

NEXT ISSUE

Vol. 28 FEBRUARY 1998 No. 8

THE VIRAGO OF VEERPURI : As Raja of Mahendragiri had instructed, Vairamukhi gets closer to Prince Veersen to carry out the diabolic act for which he has chosen her. The introduces her to *shatranj* and they play the game whenever he can find time to spend with her. Bhanupriya, the elder daughter of Prime Minister. Bodheshwar, has noticed the mole on Vairamukhi's shoulder. She is about to warn Prince Veersen, but desists. After a long interval, Vairamukhi starts receiving messages from Raja. He wants to pre-empt any move on the part of Bhanupriya, who does not disclose her find even to her sister Bhanumati. The virago in Vairamukhi gets excited. Will anything happen to the prince?

MAHABHARATA : Now that Bhishma has confided in Duryodhana how he cannot face Shikhandi on the battle-field, Duryodhana is crest-fallen. He tries to find from other leaders how long it will take for them to destroy the Pandava armies. Drona agrees with Bhishma that it will take thirty days; Kripa wants one more month. Aswathama is confident of a win in ten days, while Karna boasts of victory in just five days. When he hears that, Duryodhana is gladdened. Yudhishtira seeks the blessings of Bhishma for success on the Pandava side. Doubt arises in the mind of Arjuna how he could fight against his own kith and kin. Lord Krishna reminds him of his duty and asks him not to wait for results. Conches blow to indicate the start of the war.

THE SAGA OF 1857 : The scene of the Sepoy Mutiny shifts to Jhansi once again - to the exemplary acts of the brave Rani Lakshmibai.

ALSO: 'They stood up to the British' in comics and the illustrated feature 'The Rivers of India'.

Printed by B.V.REDDI at Prasad Process Private Ltd., 188 N.S.K. Salai, Chennai-600 026 (India) and published by B. VISWANATHA REDDI on behalf of CHANDAMAMA PUBLICATIONS, 188 N.S.K. Salai, Chandamama Buildings, Vadapalani, Chennai-600 026 (India). The stories, articles and drawings printed herein are the exclusive property of the publishers and copying or adapting them in any manner will be dealt with according to law.





Founder: CHAKRAPANI

Controlling Editor: NAGI REDDI

A REBELLION BY THE ASCETICS

What the 18th century India witnessed was perhaps the strangest rebellion in history. It was staged by the Sannyasis or Ascetics.

The ascetics lived away from human localities, in jungles and caves. They were supposed to remain totally aloof from all the social problems. Why should they rebel and against whom should they rebel?

They rebelled against the English East India Company and against such landlords who, in collaboration with the Company, mercilessly exploited the poor peasants of the eastern region of India—Bihar and Bengal. There was a famine in the seventies of the 18th century. But the Company refused to understand the problems of the peasants. It squeezed more and more tax out of them and tortured them when they had nothing more to offer.

The Sannyasis, on their way to places of pilgrimage, inspired the common people to fight their tormentors. The Company then decided to teach them a lesson. It restricted their entry into the holy towns.

Now, the Sannyasis descended in their hordes on the Company camps and plundered them. Some Muslim fakirs joined them. The rebellion was led by Bhavani Pathak, Devi Chowdhurani, Majnu Fakir, Musha Shah, Kripanath, and Cherag Ali.

Devi Chowdhurani was a lady of great valour, who lived in a houseboat, surrounded by several skiffs with trained archers.

The rebellion was suppressed after some years. But it received a touch of immortality through two novels written by the great author, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, *Ananda Math* and *Devi Chowdhurani*, both in Bengali. Our inspiring National song, "Vande Mataram", is a part of the first of these two novels.

Chandamama wishes its readers a very happy NEW YEAR



A bad habit "caged"

Vinod and Manoj were intimate friends. They used to meet quite often, either at Manoj's house or at Vinod's residence. They had only one bad habit. They would indulge in drinking, of course not in their houses, but whenever they met outside. They would sneak into their houses when they returned late, as they were sure of facing the wrath of their wives, who tried their best to wean them away from their habit, but in vain.

One day, the two women were away visiting their parents. "You come over to my place, Manoj," said Vinod, "we needn't be afraid of our womenfolk tonight!"

Manoj agreed. It was quite late in the night when he returned from work. He lit a lantern and found his way to Vinod's house. They drank to their heart's content and almost fell unconscious. When he woke up in the middle of the night, Manoj decided to go back home. He picked up his lantern and went away.

Early in the morning, he was woken up by Vinod's servant. There was a chit from him. It said: "Manoj, you mistook my bird-cage for your lantern. I'm sending it with my servant. Please send back the cage. My wife will take me to task if she were to miss the cage. Anyway, I've decided to stop drinking. I hope you, too, will follow suit."



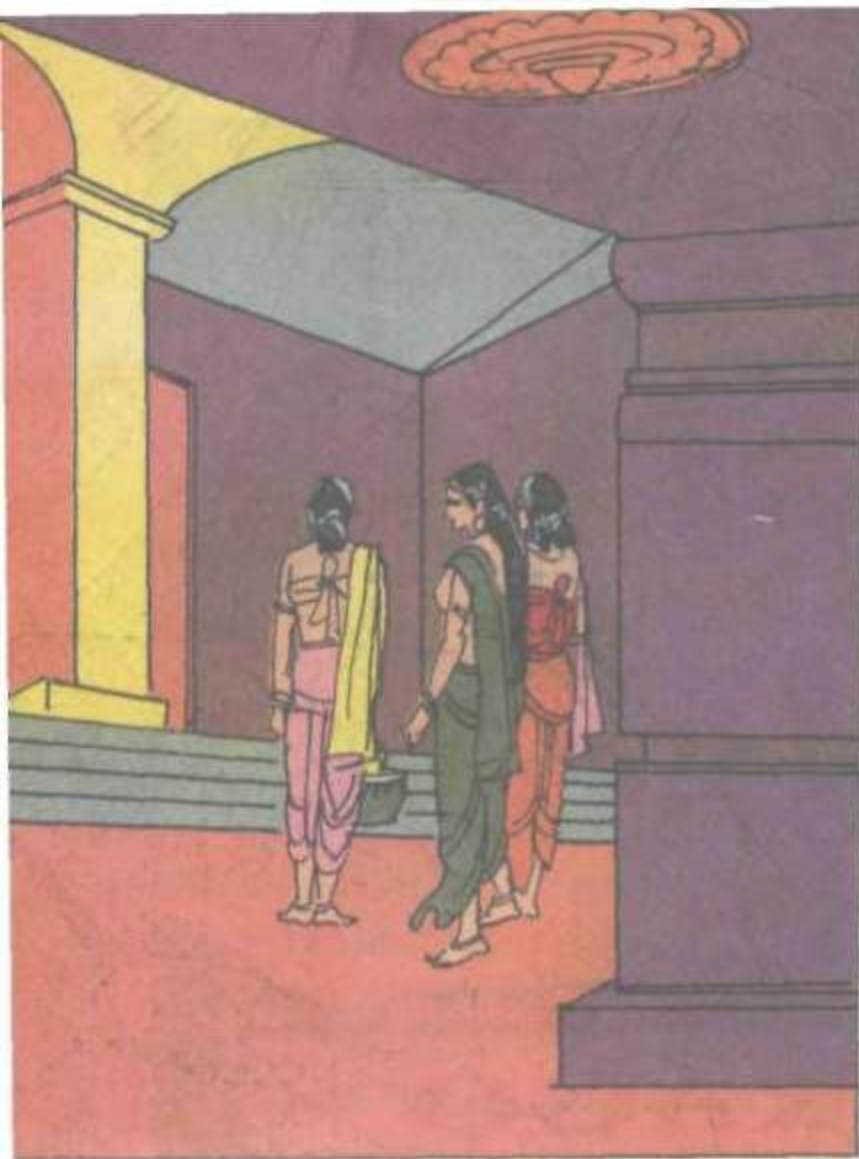


THE VIRAGO OF VEERPURI

The story so far: Vajreshwari turned Vairamukhi is sent by Raja, brother of the ruler of Mahendragiri and an expert in wizardry, to Veerpuri where he has a score to settle. Queen Suryaprabha, who was at one time almost betrothed to him, was married off to Soorasen who subsequently became the King of Veerpuri. Her brother, Marthandvarma, had accompanied her to Veerpuri where he was made army commander. He made an unsuccessful bid to poison Raja's brother when he attended Suryaprabha's wedding. 'Princess' Vairamukhi is instrumental in the mysterious death of both brother Marthandvarma and later the queen herself. No one in Veerpuri—neither King Soorasen nor Prince Veersen—suspects her of any complicity. Aware of his mother's affection for Vairamukhi, whose resemblance to her niece—Marthandvarma's missing daughter Vajreshwari—had drawn the queen closer to the princess, Prince Veersen finds in her a likeable companion. Vairamukhi is warned by Raja. She hears his voice : "Vairamukhi will not be Veersen's bride, but..."

The question remained in her mind : what else, or who else, would she be? Vairamukhi wanted to say this aloud in the expectation that Raja would give her an answer. However, Vairamukhi suddenly realised that whenever she had sat beneath the huge tree near the Kali temple, she

had only heard him and listened to whatever he wished to say. Never had she spoken to him once. It was clear that though he had access to her through some mysterious powers, he had not bestowed on her a similar facility to speak to him and get her doubts cleared. That meant, she would



have to wait for his instructions at the appropriate time.

Fortunately, Raja, had suggested to her to get closer to Prince Veersen so that she could accomplish her next mission. She had, at that moment, no clear idea what it would be, what Raja really wanted her to do. Anyway, Vairamukhi made it known to her maid, Ragini, and through her to the queen's two maids that, as desired by Prince Veersen, she had decided not to return to Mahendragiri immediately, but would stay back in Veerpuri, which was now slowly recovering from the shock of the queen's sudden and unexpected end.

She continued her regular visits to the two temples—to that of

Bhuvaneshwari in the morning, escorted by the queen's maids, and to the Kali temple in the evening, when Ragini, too, joined them. Now that Queen Suryaprabha was no more, her maids paid special attention to Princess Vairamukhi who continued to be a royal guest. That was how they took over the responsibility of accompanying her to the temple in the morning as they were hitherto doing for the queen. Only, the morning visits used to be over quickly.

In the evening, again the maids went with both the princess and Ragini, as they did not wish to leave the two alone. Suppose the princess wished to spend more time in meditation beneath the tree at the Kali temple or Prince Veersen were to meet her and decide to escort the princess back to the palace himself, Ragini should not be allowed to trace her way back to the palace alone. On her part, she found their company pleasant and day by day their friendship brought them closer. Vairamukhi did not find anything unusual about it, because what she desired for was solitude, so that she could receive messages from Raja, and look forward to more meetings with Prince Veersen at the Kali temple, if not in the palace.

However, a whole week passed by without either of them taking place. Raja had inexplicably gone silent, and the prince did not visit her at the temple.

Vairamukhi found his absence intriguing. She, however, desisted from making any direct enquiries about him, but managed to listen to the conversation between Ragini and the maids whenever they came into her apartments to attend on her, especially when Ragini had to be relieved.

It took all that week for the princess to learn that King Soorasen, who had cut short his visit to the border areas at the time of the queen's passing away, had gone back to the mountains to meet his troops and this time, he had taken with him the late commander's son, Vijaykrishna. Perhaps he was grooming the young man to take over some responsible position in the Veerpuri army.

And in the king's absence from the capital, Prince Veersen was spending most of his time with Prime Minister Bodheshwar, picking up the threads of administration just as his father, the king, had wanted him to. What Vairamukhi was not aware was that, his visits to Bodheshwar had also given the prince an opportunity to know more about the Prime Minister's now grown-up daughters, Bhanupriya and Bhanumati.

One day, the queen's maids were all smiles when they came into Vairamukhi's apartments. "Princess," they said, "there's a message for you from the prince. He'll be meeting you here. He was enquiring whether you were back from your morning visits.



We told the attendant that you were back and were resting. The prince may arrive any moment." The two then moved out of the room.

In the next few moments, they themselves ushered in Prince Veersen. Vairamukhi got up from her seat and greeted him and led him to another chair. He sat down, smiling. Ragini, who happened to be in the princess's room at that time, made her obeisance to the prince and joined the two maids who were waiting for her outside.

"I hope you're well, princess?" the prince enquired after her.

"Oh! I'm looked after perfectly well," responded Vairamukhi. "I didn't see you for several days. Were you away from Veerpuri?"



"No, I was very much here, Vairamukhi," said the prince. "The King is away, and I've to be with the Prime Minister for a longer time than is usual. I respect his age, and instead of asking him to come over to the palace, I generally go to his residence and remain there till late in the evening. Whoever wants to meet me comes to the Prime Minister's residence, so that I will have the benefit of his wise counsel if I am called upon to take any decision. And by the time I come back, a messenger from the King would be waiting for me. He will have some message to give and the King insists on my sending him a daily report. All this keeps me busy throughout the day."

"And today? Aren't you going to meet the Prime Minister?" queried Vairamukhi with surprise, and some expectation writ large on her face.

"Of course, I shall be going, but today I propose to take you along with me!" said the prince, without telling her when and why, leaving so much to the princess's imagination.

"Me? Along with you? Where? The Prime Minister's residence? What'll I do there?" The questions flowed from Vairamukhi's mouth one after another.

"Princess, you've been here for several days now," said Veersen. "But my mother never took you anywhere, except to the temples in Veerpuri. Of course, she was a pious woman and very devoted to my father, the king, always looking after his needs and comforts. The Prime Minister's daughters, Bhanupriya and Bhanumati, and the army commander's daughter, Vajreshwari, used to come to the palace once a while, when they were children. But they almost stopped their visits when they grew up. Vajreshwari disappeared and has not been traced so far. She was fond of hunting and often went out with her brother Vijaykrishna. One day, she did not come back.

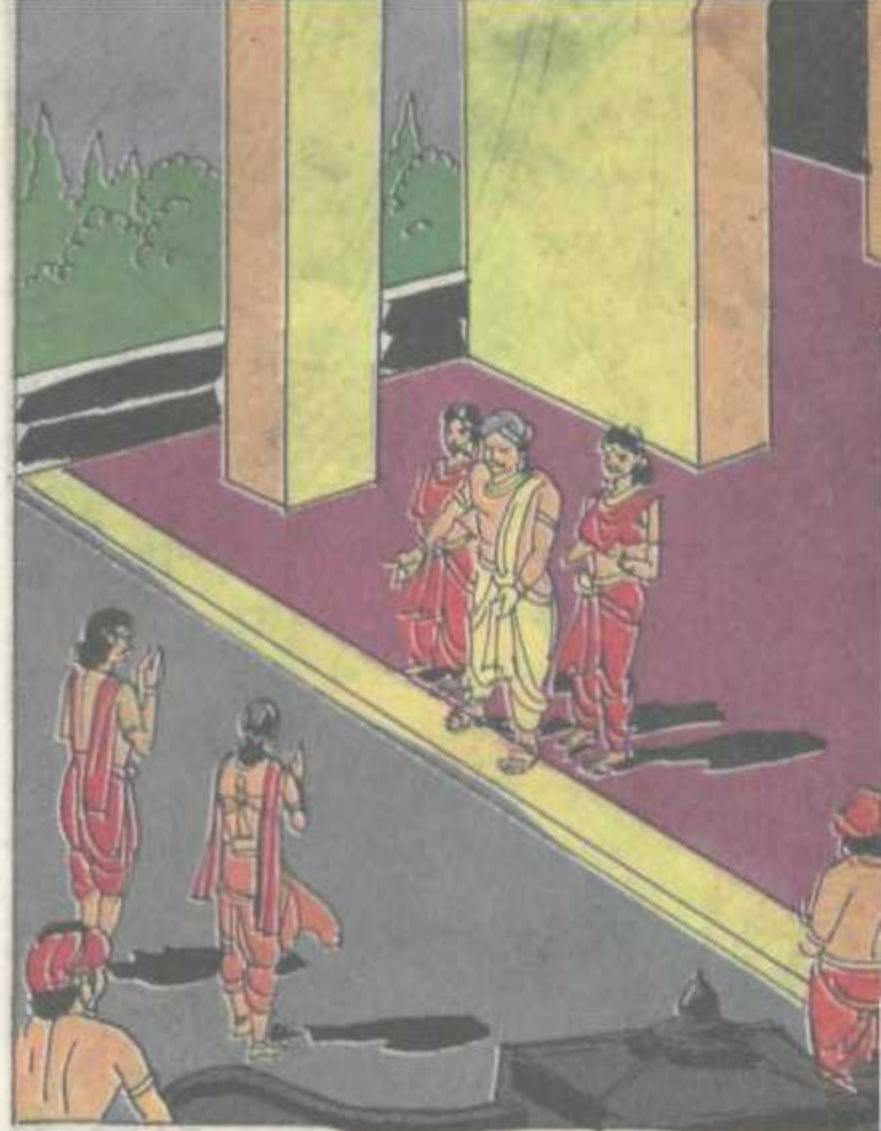
"Bhanupriya and Bhanumati are learning music and dance and they seldom get any time for going out. Bodheshwar tells me that he gives them his company for some time every

day and teaches them statecraft. The younger one, Bhanumati, is quite clever in playing *Shatranj* (chess). In fact it was she who taught me the game and I play with her when I find that Bodheshwar has courtiers calling on him with their problems and petitions. Vairamukhi, I wish that you met the sisters. I have been telling them about you and they did express a desire to meet you, too. One of the maids will come and tell you when the palanquin is ready."

Veersen did not wait to hear whether the princess was willing to go with him or meet the two girls. His was almost like an order and she thought she should obey him. After all, Raja's direction to her was to get closer to the prince to achieve her mission.

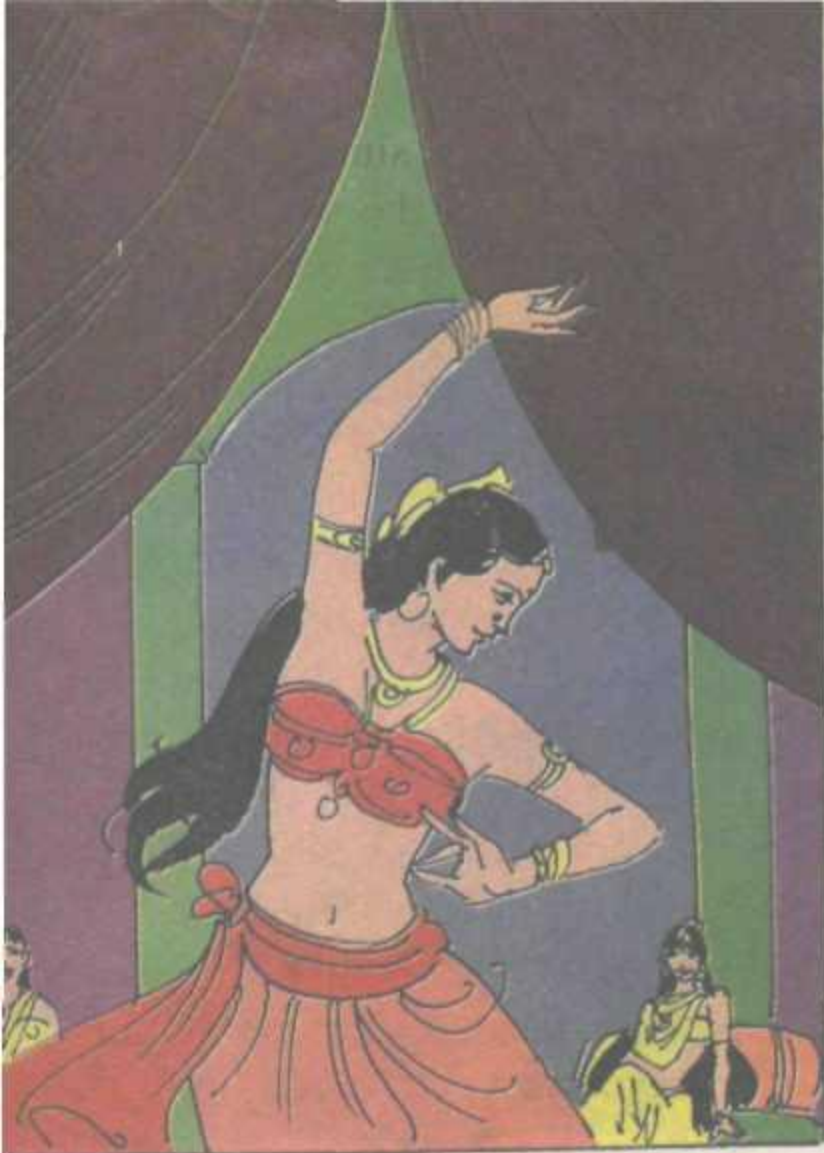
The palanquin kept pace with the prince and his horse, but he took care that he rode only slowly. Veersen and Vairamukhi arrived at the Prime Minister's residence almost at the same time. Bodheshwar and his daughters received them. The girls led away the princess, while the prince followed the Prime Minister.

Bodheshwar's daughters made friends with Vairamukhi very easily. The elder of the sisters, Bhanupriya, was quick to notice the resemblance between the princess and the late army commander's daughter Vajreshwari. For a long time, she could not take her eyes off Vairamukhi, as she and Bhanumati carried on their conversa-



tion. Bhanupriya remained a mute listener or interjected the conversation with remarks in monosyllables and exclamations. Vairamukhi carefully avoided talking about Mahendragiri and confined the dialogue to her visits to the temples and the affection she received from the late Queen Suryaprabha, and her few meetings with Prince Veersen. She evaded all queries about her parents, mostly from Bhanumati who was rather surprised that though a princess, Vairamukhi had not cared to learn music or dance. In her turn, Vairamukhi prodded the sisters to show their talents, and some time was taken by Bhanumati for playing on the Veena and later singing when Bhanupriya danced a few





numbers.

"I've never seen such graceful dance before in my life," said Vairamukhi, with a heavy sigh.

"If you will be in Veerpuri for some more days, princess," said Bhanumati, "we shall try to teach you whatever we have learnt."

"I don't know for how long I'll remain here," replied Vairamukhi. "I came to Veerpuri because I had heard quite a lot about the Kali temple. It was the queen who told me about the Bhuvaneshwari temple, which she visited every morning, and she made it a point to ask me to go with her and that became a habit. After her sudden passing away, I wanted to return to Mahendragiri, but the prince wished

that I stayed back for some days. Whenever he permits me to go..."

Just then Prince Veersen's arrival was announced, and the next moment he entered the room where the three girls were having a tete-a-tete.

"Did I hear my name being mentioned?" he asked, looking first at Vairamukhi, then at Bhanumati and Bhanupriya.

It was Bhanupriya - the eldest of the three - who answered: "We were telling the princess that we will teach her music and dance if she were to be in Veerpuri for some more days."

"Yes, why not?" said Veersen, smiling at the princess. "The princess will be with us for some more days unless, of course, she is eager to go back..." He left it unfinished.

"Till you permit me to go back to Mahendragiri, O prince," said Vairamukhi, "I shall remain in Veerpuri."

"By the way, princess, do you play Shatranj?" asked Veersen. "If you know, we shall play a game or two."

"No, prince, I do not play any game," Vairamukhi responded apologetically.

"That does not matter, princess," said Bhanumati. "We shall teach you how to play Shatranj. The prince is fond of playing it." By then she had prepared the table for a game.

"Come on, princess," said Bhanupriya, "we shall watch them play."

The two stood by Veersen and

Bhanumati as they sat at either side of the table and played for some time. "Your father must have had his rest by now, and it's time I joined him for more discussion. So, let me go. And Bhanumati, please teach her how to play, so that I can engage her in a game tomorrow when I bring her here again." The prince then left for where Bodheshwar would be waiting for him.

While the two played, Vairamukhi dropped a few coins from the table. As she tried to pick them up from the floor, one end of her *dupatta* dropped to the ground revealing her shoulder. Bhanupriya, who was watching her movements, suddenly noticed the mole on the princess's shoulders. Her face went pale. Fortunately neither her sister, nor the princess saw the sudden change of colour on her face. She had a horrified look. Her memory went back many years when she and Bhanumati used to play with the little daughter of the army commander.

Hadn't she seen a similar mole on Vajreshwari? But she was now not sure whether it was on her right shoulder or left. Was Vairamukhi really the princess of Mahendragiri? Or was she the missing Vajreshwari? The lurking doubt made Bhanupriya dumbstruck and she was almost blind to what was happening in the room.

An attendant had by then come to announce that the palanquin was waiting for Princess Vairamukhi. "The prince will follow you later, princess," the attendant told her.

As Vairamukhi got up to go, Bhanumati pleaded, "You must come again, tomorrow, won't you?"

"Yes, Bhanumati," replied Vairamukhi smilingly. She then looked at Bhanupriya and heard her say haltingly, "Yes, of course, you must, p-ri-nce-ss!"

Vairamukhi did not find anything strange in her behaviour.

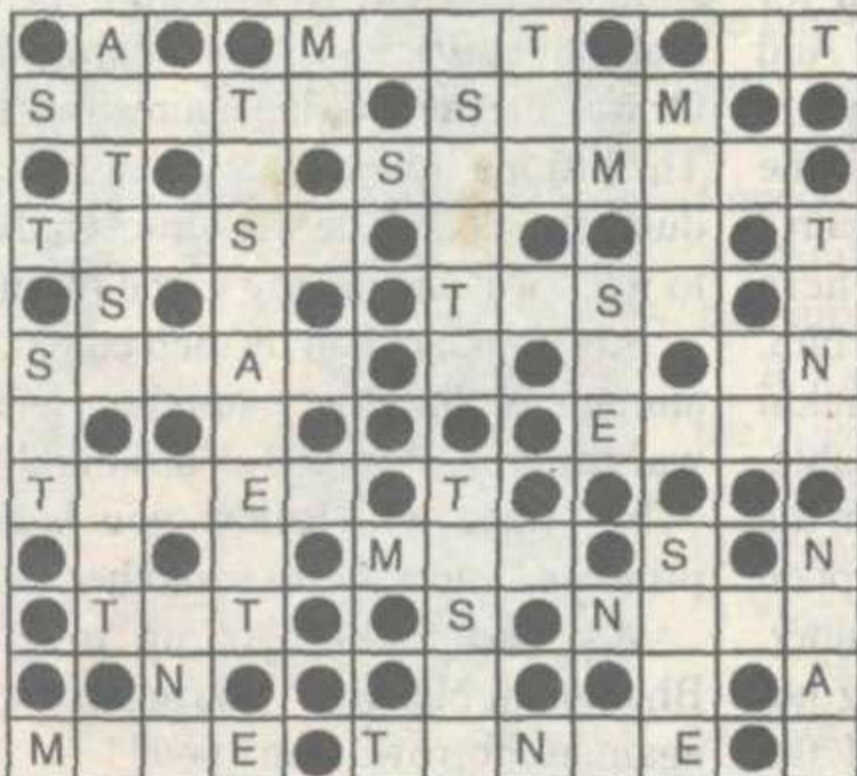
- To continue



A MERICAN PUZZLE

-P.S.Kumar

Find 32 words from the single word
'STATEMENT'



Clues

- 2 letter words - 5
- 3 letter words - 7
- 4 letter words - 10
- 5 letter words - 6
- 7 letter words - 3
- 9 letter words - 1
- Total words - 32

Solution

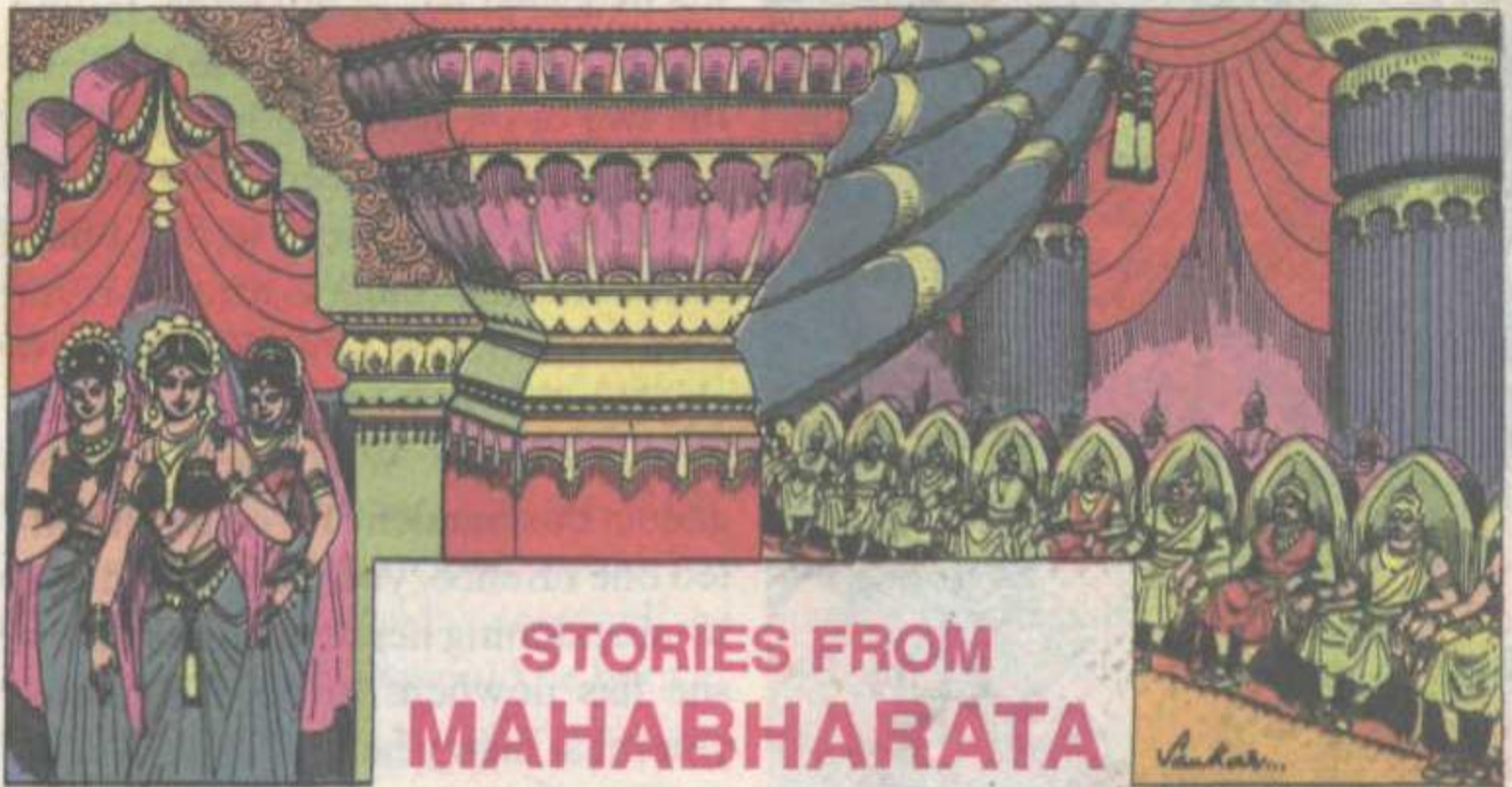


CROSS WORD

-P.Ramu



Using the
picture clues make
connecting words.



STORIES FROM MAHABHARATA

The story so far: The Pandava armies prepare for the battle. Duryodhana beseech Bhishma to lead the Kaurava armies in the battle. He agrees to the request, but says he would not fight side by side with Karna, whom he dislikes. When he is informed of this condition, Karna declares that he would not fight as long as the old veteran remains on the battlefield. Though dismayed by the division in his ranks, Duryodhana appoints Bhishma as the supreme commander of the Kaurava forces. The two armies advance, and are ranged against each other on the battlefield.

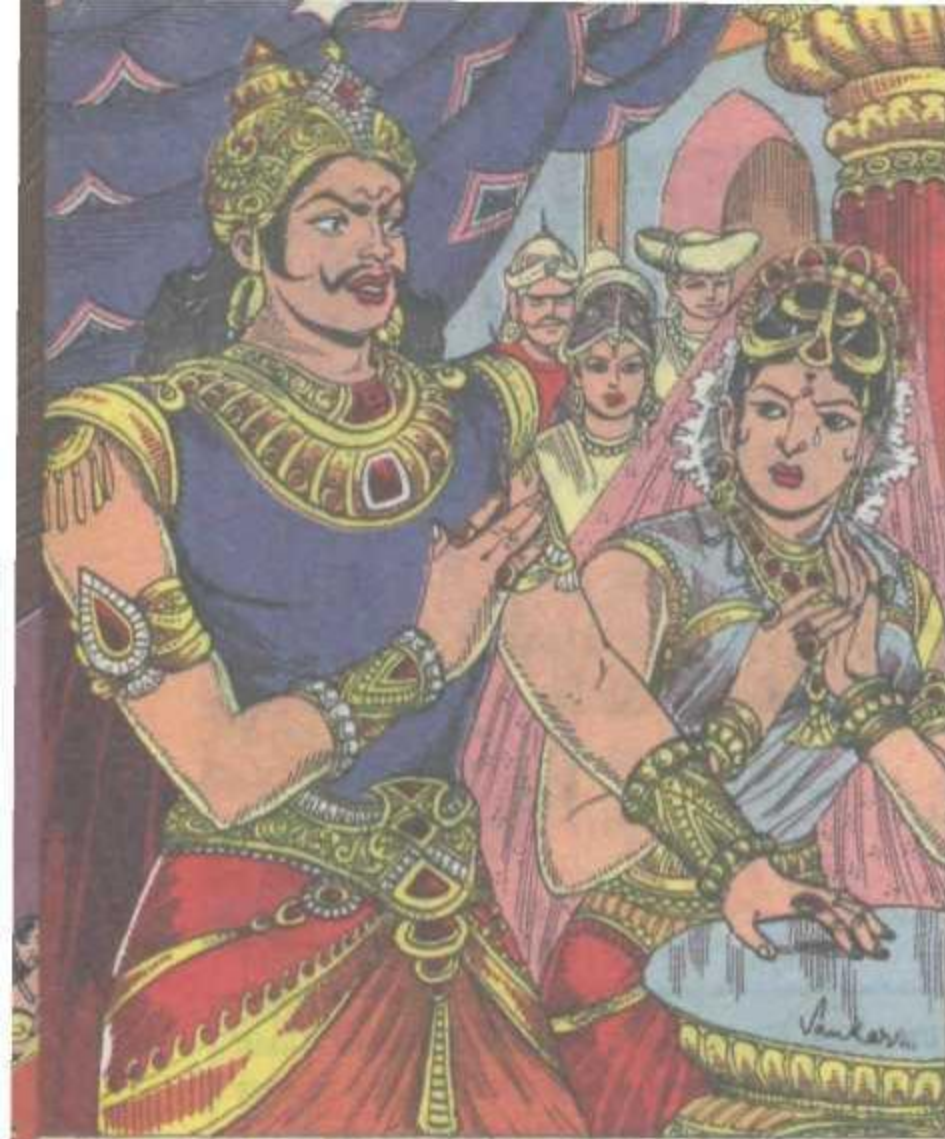
The mighty Bhishma spoke to Duryodhana about the warriors on both sides. Then Duryodhana said : "Sir, why do you refuse to fight against Shikhandi? He is not a great fighter! Therefore, you must have a good reason for not going against him."

Bhishma replied : "Duryodhana, after the death of my father Santhanu, I ascended the throne and made Vichitravirya the Crown Prince. Some years later, I stepped down in favour of Vichitravirya who became king. I acted as his Regent."

The patriarch continued, while the

dead past got revived in his memory. "It was time for Vichitravirya's wedding. At that time, the King of Kasi decided to hold the Swayamavara of his three daughters—Amba, Ambika, and Ambalika. As I had been invited, I went to Kasi. All the assembled kings were surprised to see me there. I reassured them that I had not gone there to choose a bride for myself, but I was there on behalf of Vichitravirya. I then took the three princesses captive and challenged all the kings to fight me, if they dared to rescue them. A bitter battle ensued, and I emerged

39. THE STRANGE STORY OF SHIKHANDI



victorious.

"But Amba, the eldest princess, requested that she be allowed to marry King Salwa, as she was in love with him and he with her. So, I sent her to King Salwa, who unfortunately refused to marry her because she had been abducted by me. Amba blamed me for her misfortune.

"She roamed the forests seething with rage and plotting revenge. She met a hermit named Saikavathya, who took pity on her.

"In consultation with some other hermits, they came to a decision. Accordingly, the hermits took her to Parasurama, the son of Sage Jamadagni, and requested him to fulfil Amba's desire. That was to force

me to accept her as my bride, failing which a battle would ensue between the two of us, resulting in my death.

"Parasurama agreed to try the impossible and sent word to me. I hastened to the banks of the river Saraswati to meet him. When he saw me, he said: 'Bhishma, you've vowed never to marry. Why, then, did you abduct this maiden? Having committed one offence, you have added to it by abandoning her in the forest. Now she has nowhere to go. Therefore, you must marry her.'

"I explained as best as I could the reasons for my actions. After all, she had requested me to release her. I could not be blamed if King Salwa did not accept her!

"But Parasurama paid no attention to my words and challenged me to fight him.

"A great battle was fought by us for twenty-four days on the field of Kurukshetra and at last Parasurama decided to withdraw. He then advised Amba to seek my protection and went back to his hermitage on mount Mahendra.

"Writhing in humiliation, and burning with rage, Amba sat on the banks of the Yamuna and prayed to Lord Siva for twelve long years. Many were the attempts made to disturb her meditation, but nothing succeeded, and at last Lord Siva appeared before her. She prayed for the necessary power to take revenge



on me, and the Lord prophesied that she would be reborn as a woman who would later become a man and be the instrument of my death. Then Amba jumped into the sacrificial fire and ended her life.

"King Dhruvada, who had tasted defeat at my hands, also prayed to Lord Siva for revenge on me. The Lord decreed that a child would be born to him to help him accomplish his desire. The child would be born a female but would be transformed into a male.

"A daughter was born to Dhruvada and he was sorely disappointed because he had wanted a son who would be a great warrior. So he brought up his daughter as a male and told everyone that a son had been born to him. The child was named Shikhandi, and

in course of time he learnt all the martial arts.

"One day, Dhruvada's wife said : 'The Almighty declared that our child would be transformed. It might have already happened. Perhaps he is already a male. So let us arrange for his wedding. Perhaps that would bring about his final change.'

"Accordingly, Shikhandi was married to the daughter of King Daasaru. The bride's name was also Shikhandi."

"But the latter detected the truth about her husband and sent word to her father who was highly incensed at this deception. He gathered his forces and invaded the land of King Dhruvada. The king and queen were alarmed at this development and did not know what to do.



"At this, Shikhandi ran to the forest and sought refuge with a sprite named Sthanukarna. The latter, taking pity on the hapless Shikhandi, said: 'Don't worry. I'll assume your form for some time, and you can be a man once more. Go back to your father, and he'll rejoice to see your transformation. Then, all dangers can be averted. Once peace is established, you can come back here and we'll exchange our identities.'

"King Dhrupada was happy to see his daughter transformed into a man and sent word to King Daasaru who sent some emissaries to test for themselves the truth of the former's assertion. When he was told that Shikhandi was indeed a man, and not a woman, he rebuked his daughter severely for misleading him.

"Meanwhile, Kubera, Lord of all the spirites, came to see Sthanukarna and was deeply annoyed because the latter would not see him. So, he caused the hapless sprite to be dragged into

his presence, and demanded to know the reason for the transformation. Sthanukarna revealed his pact with Shikhandi and pleaded for mercy. But Lord Kubera cursed him to remain a woman all his life.

"When Shikhandi returned, Sthanukarna told him of his personal misfortune, but agreed that the former could always retain his male form."

Bhishma ended this long and rambling chronicle of Shikhandi and said with a heavy sigh: "Duryodhana, I cannot kill this Shikhandi. Though the prince has now retained his male form, yet I cannot kill him, for he was once a woman. I can no more fight against those who disguise themselves as women, than kill those who have been transformed into men, after having been women."

Duryodhana realised with a sinking feeling that the invincible patriarch would not fight against that 'one man' on the battlefield.

—To continue



THEY STOOD UP TO THE BRITISH!

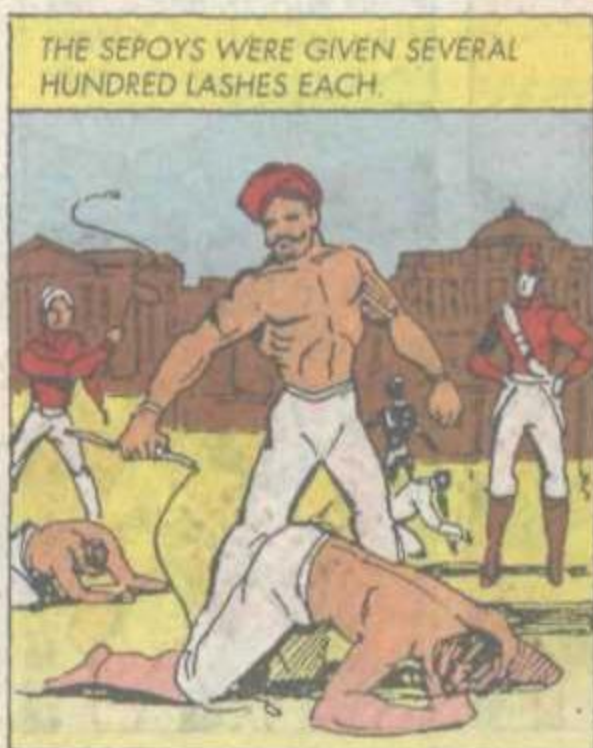
6

THE MUTINY AT VELLORE

TEXT: MEERA UGRA ♦ ARTIST: T.G.S.

MANY BATTALIONS OF THE EAST INDIA COMPANY WERE STATIONED AT THE VELLORE FORT, IN 1806 —





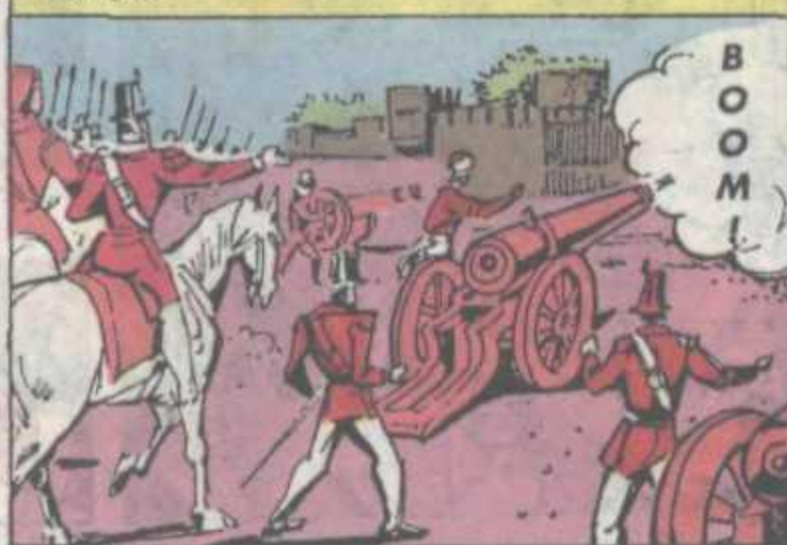


* AFTER TIPU'S DEATH AND DEFEAT AT SRIRANGAPATTINAM IN 1799. MOIZUDDIN WAS TIPU'S SON.

COLONEL GILLESPIE RUSHED TO VELLORE FROM ARCOT WITH HIS MEN.



...AND AT HIS HEELS ARRIVED THE REST OF THE SEVENTH MADRAS CAVALRY AND GALLOPER GUNS ...



...AND —



THE FORT WAS STORMED AND THE MUTINEERS WERE ARRESTED. LATER —



AND NEARLY A HUNDRED BADLY WOUNDED!



FOUR HUNDRED MUTINEERS LOST THEIR LIVES. MANY MORE WERE WOUNDED. TIPU'S SON WHO HAD A BRIEF MOMENT OF GLORY AND OTHER MEMBERS OF HIS FAMILY WERE SENT TO MADRAS AND LATER TO CALCUTTA.



New Tales of King Vikram
and the Vampire

Who was right?

Dark was the night and weird the atmosphere. It rained from time to time. Gusts of wind shook the trees. Between thunderclaps and the moaning of jackals could be heard the eerie laughter of spirits. Flashes of lightning revealed fearsome faces.

But King Vikram did not swerve a bit. He climbed the ancient tree and brought the corpse down. However, as soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground with the corpse lying on his shoulder, the vampire that possessed the corpse spoke: "O King, normally you should be enjoying a good sleep at this hour of the night. Instead of doing that, what makes you go through this strange ritual? Of course, you are aware that whatever a sage says is either true or will prove to be true, and that kings and rulers would usually seek the advice of sages before they take a decision on any important matters of state. However, you must also be aware that two sages may not hold similar views about the same problem. They would invariably be different. In such a situation, the king



may have to think of various aspects before he accepts either of the views. King Vijayavarma once faced such a situation. According to the Rajguru, the king's problems were due to certain circumstances. However, his Minister thought that they were caused by different circumstances. O King! Have you ever received such conflicting advices ? Probably, you'll know better if I told you the story of Vijayavarma." The vampire then began his narration.

Vijayavarma was the ruler of Vijaynagar. His ambition was to become an expert archer. He wished to possess a bow like "Gandeevam" which Arjuna had acquired. He wanted to tour the country weilding a

bow like that. He sent for his Minister and disclosed his wish. "The bow must be as heavy and as big as Gandeevam. And nobody else should be possessing one like that. Everybody should wonder whether the bow is the real Gandeevam of Arjuna or the Kodandam of Rama !"

The Minister first searched for a person who was capable of making a bow like that. In fact, not one, but he also found a few tutors of archery who promised to make one for the king. The Minister asked all of them to work on the bow, promising them a handsome reward. They worked together for a month and brought to the Minister the bow they had fashioned. The Minister was satisfied, and Vijayavarma was mightily pleased. He was certain that the bow would be instrumental for his fortune and success in life. Whoever got an opportunity to see the bow had no doubt that it was the real Gandeevam of the Pandava prince.

The king waited for an auspicious day to string the bow. The solemn ceremony was watched by several of his courtiers. They all blessed him that he would soon become another Arjuna, a famous archer like the *Mahabharata* hero.

Not long after, Vijayavarma one day set out for the forest a-hunting. The bow got him some good game and he returned to his palace. On his way back, the bow hanging from his

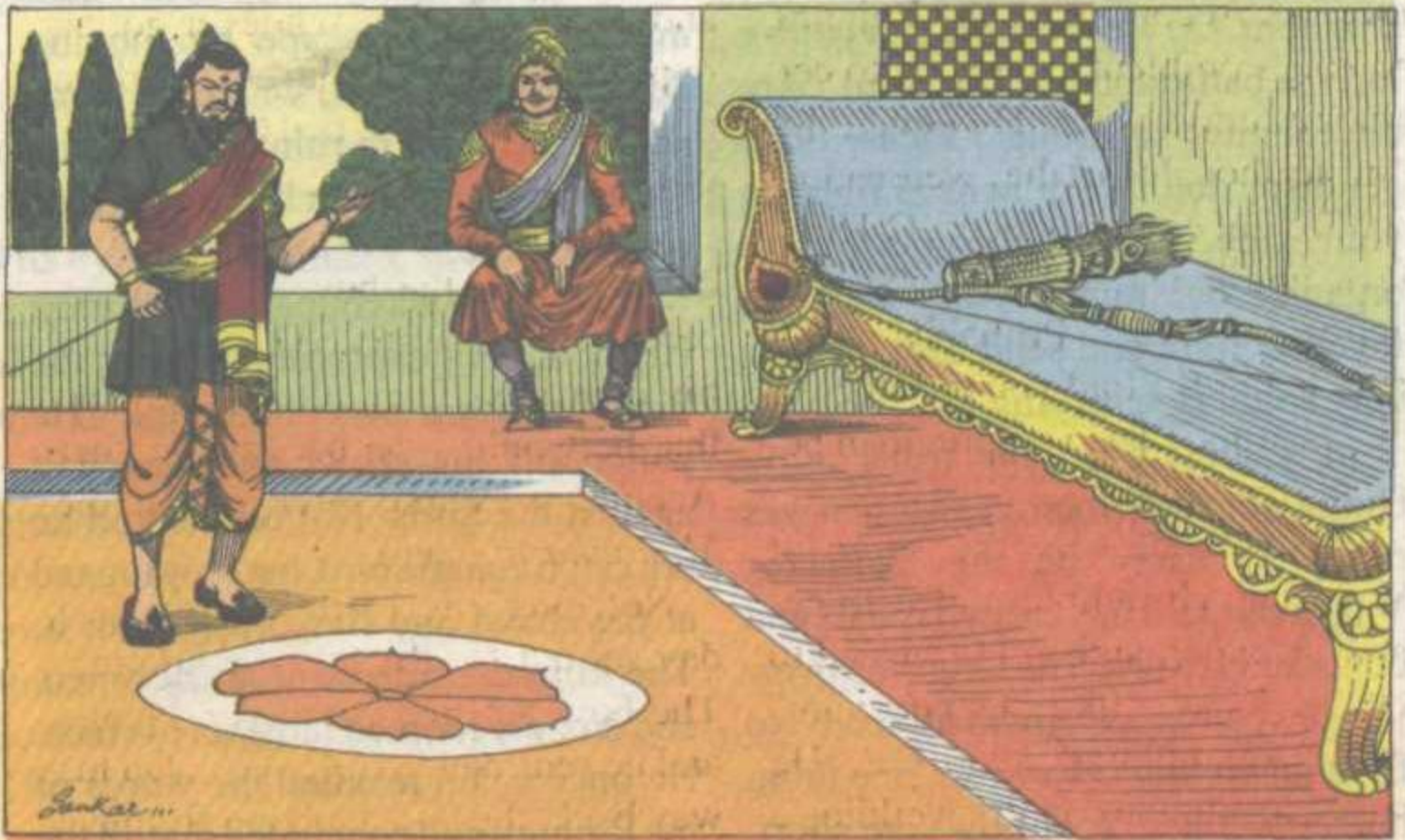
shoulders hit the low branch of a tree and broke at one end. On arrival at the palace, he called some archers among his soldiers and asked them to mend the bow, which they did.

Later, Vijayavarma had occasion to call on the Rajguru and told him what had happened. The sage drew on the floor a circle and lotus petals on which he placed pieces of silk thread. He then folded his hands and prayed for some time closing his eyes. The chanting over, he also meditated for a while, and then opened his eyes. "Vijaya ! I've meditated on whatever has been stated in the Sastras; I also recollected my own guru's directions about the use of bow and arrow. And I have come to the conclusion that the damage to your bow has cast some evil influences. The bow, after re-

pairs, may look all right, but the crack is deep and cannot be mended properly. I would, therefore, advise you not to use the bow !"

Though the king listened to the Rajguru's words, he did not want to part with his proud possession. So, wherever he went, he carried the bow with him, hung on his shoulders. Meanwhile, Vijaynagar faced a threat from the neighbouring kingdom of Vangapuri. The ruler there led a huge army and camped in front of the gates of Vijaynagar, awaiting the return of his emissary who had carried his list of demands to Vijayavarma.

He sent away the emissary empty-handed and decided to defend Vijaynagar and made preparations for a battle. The Rajguru was sent for. He once again warned the king: "Don't



set out with that accursed bow. You'll only lose the battle and get hurt !"

Vijayavarma did not heed that advice, too. After all, wasn't he an expert in archery, just like Arjuna? He fought with the King of Vangapuri who defeated him in no time—all because the arrows he sent from the bow got deflected, missing their targets. Vijayavarma now had to make a quick retreat. In the confusion, he lost his way and reached a tribal habitat in the forest. He saw a cluster of rocks around a big tree and sat there to take rest for a while and regain his breath.

Some of the tribals happened to see him and ran and told their chieftain. He rushed to the king and was perturbed when he saw him gasping. "Your majesty ! We're told that Vangapuri has laid a siege to our kingdom. Do we presume that you've lost the battle and have escaped ? Are the enemies so strong ? Please don't get dispirited. We're here to fight on your side. Give us sometime to organise our ranks. Then we shall together fight and send back the enemy soldiers scurrying !"

In a short time, the tribal army comprising both men and women was ready to carry on the fight for Vijayavarma. They carried spears and bows and arrows. The king was overjoyed when he saw them all ready to fight on his side. However, one thing bothered him. "Your bows are short.

They won't send arrows to any long distance. How can you fight with such light-weight bows and short arrows ? Look at my strong, tall bow !"

The tribal chief had an answer to the problem posed by Vijayavarma. "Your majesty ! One will need such a huge bow only if one were to go to the battlefield on a horse or a chariot. Short bows are ideal for those who fight from level ground."

Vijayavarma suddenly remembered what the Rajguru had remarked about his bow looking like the Gandeevam.

Before long, the Vangapuri army reached the forest in search of Vijayavarma. The soldiers clashed with the tribals, who stood their ground bravely. While the fight was on, Vijayavarma had apprehensions about a victory. So, he once again made good his escape by moving deep into the forest, where he came across a temple in ruins. He entered the temple and searched for a safe place to hide.

By now, he was hungry and thirsty. He thought of capturing some of the birds hovering over the temple. He pulled off his shawl and waved it against the birds. Not only could he not catch a single bird, but they tugged at the shawl and flew away with it. The king considered it an ill-omen, and anxiety loomed large on his face. He once again recalled the words of the Rajguru and concluded that all the

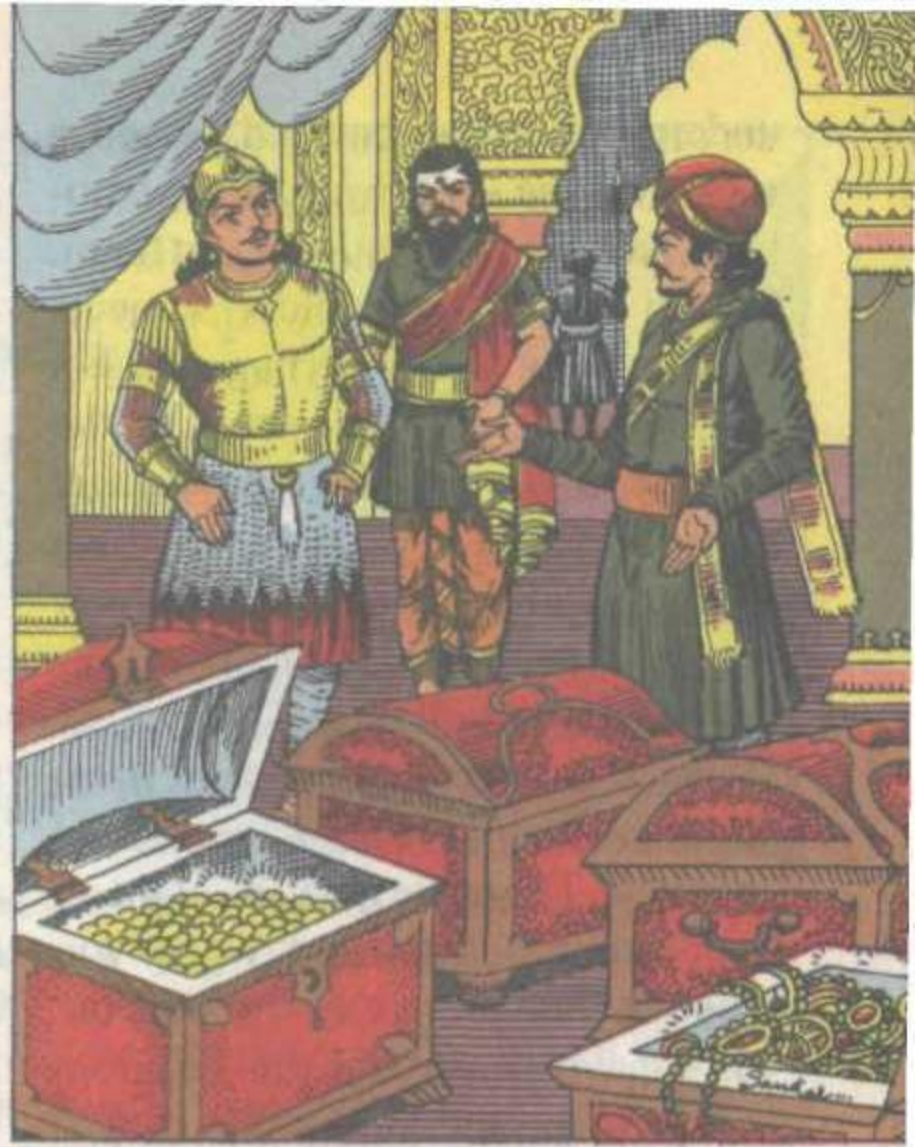


ominous happenings were due to the fact that he did not pay any heed to his advice not to touch the accursed bow. To begin with, he lost the fight with the Vangapuri army and had to run away from the battlefield. Now he had to part with his royal robe. He, therefore, decided to part with the bow.

For the last time he strung an arrow and aimed it at a rock. He then broke the bow into pieces and threw them away. He went up to the rock and found to his surprise that it had split into two, revealing a bright light through the wide opening. What! An underground chamber? How come there was such a chamber inside a forest? Who would have built it? Why should there be a chamber if nobody was going to stay there? Was it being used for some other purpose? wondered Vijayavarma.

He slowly stepped down into the room from where the bright light was coming. He saw four huge treasure-chests. He cautiously opened them. His eyes were blinded, because each one of them had glittering gold coins and jewellery, and twinkling diamonds and other precious stones.

Before he could climb out of the chamber, the tribal chief entered the room. "We've been searching for you everywhere, your majesty! We've thwarted the enemy and many of the soldiers became a prey to our arrows. The others ran away to Vangapuri.



"We've taken their king captive."

Vijayavarma was overjoyed once again. He complimented the tribal chief and praised his army. He then asked them to carry the four treasure-chests to his palace. The tribals escorted him in a procession. The Rajguru was at the palace to welcome the victorious king. Soon the court assembled and Vijayavarma showed them what he had brought from the forest. When they saw what the treasure chests contained, they too were blinded. The king recounted his adventures in the forest.

"These must have been in the possession of your ancestors, your majesty!" said the Minister. "And they must have carefully hidden it in the



underground chamber and placed a rock over the opening. Till now, nobody had any knowledge about them, though some of the older subjects believed that the Vijaynagar rulers had amassed wealth to be used for the welfare of the people. Anyway, all praise for your 'Gandeevam' which alone could have sent a strong arrow to pierce the rock !"

The Rajguru thought otherwise. "Vijay, remember that you came upon the treasure *after* you had discarded your bow. The curse it had brought on you earlier disappeared when you broke it into pieces. From now on, you'll have peace and the kingdom will prosper, and your subjects will be happy."

The vampire concuded the story at this point and turned to Vikramaditya. "O King! The Minister attributed the king's find of treasure to his strong bow. However, the Rajguru thought otherwise and said Vijayavarma had come upon the treasure only *after* he

discarded the bow. Who do you think was right? If you fail to give me a satisfactory answer, need I remind you that your head will be blown to pieces?"

The king, as usual, had a ready answer. "The Minister was right. If the king had not sent the arrow at the rock, it would not have split to reveal an underground chamber full of hitherto unknown treasure. And he broke the bow into pieces only after he had sent that arrow. What the Rajguru did not realise was the possibility of the king not breaking the bow to pieces and still going to find where his arrow had fallen. It was the arrow, in a way, which was instrumental in the king finding the treasure. So, the Minister was very right."

The vampire had no doubt that Vikramaditya had outwitted him once again. He flew back to the ancient tree, carrying the corpse with him. Vikramaditya drew his sword and went after the vampire.



ON THE BANKS OF THE KAVERI - I

THE STARTING POINT

Text : Jayanthi Mahalingam ♦ Artworks: Gopakumar

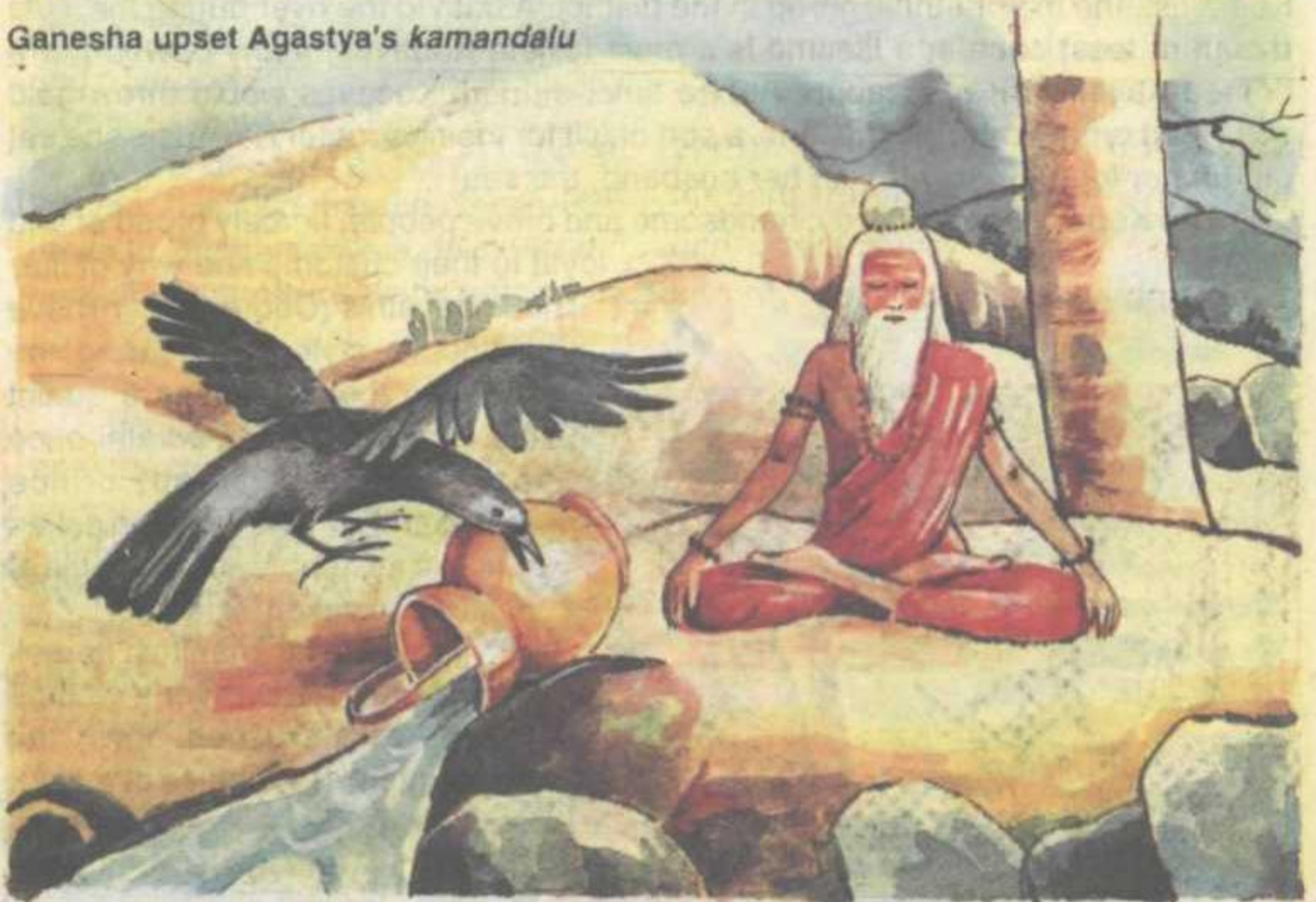
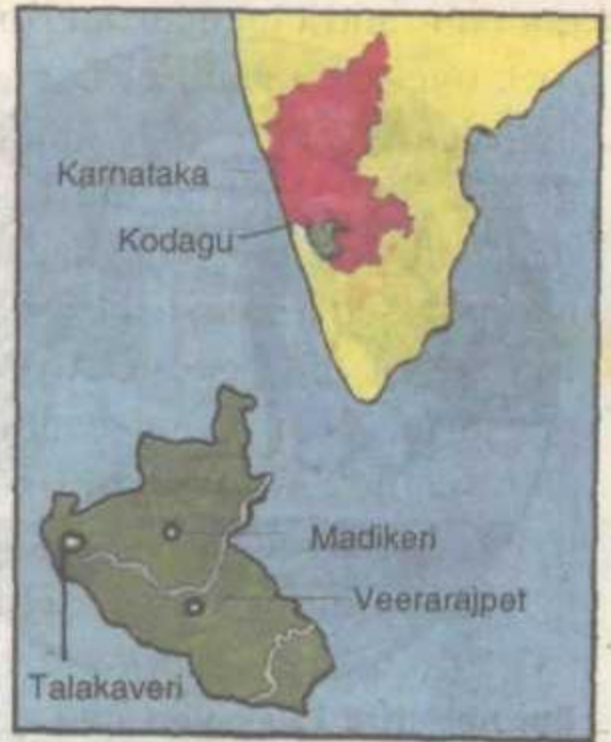
One of the seven major rivers of India, the Kaveri is revered as **Dakshina Ganga**, the Ganges of the South, **Ponni**, the Golden One, **Akhanda**, the Indivisible and **Annapoorna**, the Giver of Plenty. She is a 765-km long lifeline for the people of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

The Kaveri in Mythology

Several legends abound about the origin of the Kaveri.

According to the *Skanda Purana* the river Kaveri flowed in Kailasa, the abode of Shiva. Shiva asked her to enter Agastya's *kamandalu* so that the sage could have a perpetual source of water which he could carry wherever he went. Later, Sage Agastya crossed the Vindhya and travelled down south. At that time the south was reeling under a severe drought as an *asura* had blocked the rain-bearing clouds. At the request of Indra, Ganesha took wing as a crow and knocked down Agastya's *kamandalu*, thus releasing the waters of the Kaveri.

Ganesha upset Agastya's *kamandalu*





The shrine at Talakaveri

The Kaveri in Kodagu

The Kaveri has its source at the foot of the Brahmagiri hills at a place called Talakaveri in Kodagu (Coorg) district of Karnataka.

Every October, usually on the 16th or 17th, on a day known as *Tulasankramana*, a spring starts bubbling, signalling the beginning of the month-long festival of *Tulasangam*. The waters of the spring fill up a large rectangular tank called *Pushkarni*.

A large crowd of devotees gathers to watch the spring come to life. A loud cheer goes up when this happens and then there is no holding back the crowd. The pilgrims break the barricades and swarm all over the tank eager to take a holy dip and to collect some of the water to take home. Worshippers then throng the tiny shrine, little more than a cell, to offer oblations to the river goddess.

Pilgrims also worship at the Agasteeswara temple a few metres uphill, before toiling up to the peak of the Brahmagiri hills, an ascent of 90 m from the Talakaveri pond.

The Kaveri festival of *Tulasangam* is especially important to the Coorgs or Kodavas, the major ethnic group in the district. A bath in the river during the *Tula* month at least once in a lifetime is a must for the Kodavas, many of whom are named Kaveri or Kaveriyappa. At one time, affluent Kodavas would throw gold coins and ornaments into the tank, a sort of gift for their daughter Kaveri as she set out on her long journey to join her husband, the sea!

The Kodavas are a sturdy, handsome and brave people, fiercely proud of and loyal to their customs and way of life.



The Kodavathis (Coorg women) have a distinctive style of wearing the saree, and thereby hangs a quaint story. It is said that Parvathi once appeared to Kodagu prince Devakantha in a dream and asked him to assemble all his people at a place called Valamburi. She promised to manifest herself there. As everyone waited, Parvathi rushed down the mountain in the guise of a river. Such was the force of the torrent that the women's sarees were

turned back 180 degrees. To this day, Kodavathis tie their sarees the other way round!

And Kaveri, in appreciation perhaps, of the reverence and affection shown to her, has endowed Kodagu with nature's plenty. This beautiful district abounds in bamboo, teak and sandalwood forests, besides the ubiquitous coffee plantations and paddy fields.

Madikeri (Mercara), the former British headquarters, is Kodagu district's main town and Veerarajpet its ancient capital. The climate is salubrious most of the year. Only in summer does the temperature rise beyond 30°C. The district has three places which receive an annual rainfall of more than 5000 mm.

In Madikeri, the most prominent landmark is the fort and the palace inside it, both built by Mudduraja of the Haleri dynasty in 1681. Now the palace has been converted to a museum. It has a large collection of artefacts, including 'hero stones' or *virakkals*, from different parts of Kodagu.

At Bhagamandala, nestled at the foot of the Brahmagiri hills, the Kaveri is joined by her first tributary, the Kanaka. People believe that an underground, invisible stream, Sujyoti also joins the Kaveri here. This *triveni sangam* is deemed as holy as the one at Prayag. It is said that the Ganga comes down to Bhagamandala to cleanse herself of people's sins by bathing in the Kaveri as an invisible, subterranean stream.

The Sri Bhagandeswara temple situated near the confluence, is a well-known Saivite shrine. In 1790, the temple was damaged during a battle between a local ruler named Dodda Veerarajendra and Tipu Sultan, who had occupied the temple. Three copper tiles on the roof of the temple were destroyed. Veerarajendra replaced them with silver tiles which can be seen to this day.



The Kodavathis' sarees were swept around

Bhagamandala has a honey marketing centre known as 'Madhuvana'. Bees are reared here and there is a rare apiary museum, one of the few in the country. It is equally famous for its fragrant cardamoms.

On the Kodagu-Mysore border is Kushalnagar. Hyder Ali, ruler of Mysore so named the town because he received the good news of son Tipu's birth when he was campaigning here. Beyond Kushalnagar, the Kaveri forms a natural boundary between Kodagu and Mysore districts.

Periyapattana, situated on the Madikeri-Mysore road, was once the favourite haunt of tigers. Legend has it that the big cats occupied the temples and forts in the town and it took all the skill of the renowned *shikaris* of Kodagu

to render the place safe for habitation. The North Kodagu Club in Periyapattana boasts of no less distinguished a past patron than Sir Winston Churchill. He is said to have stayed here during his days as a subaltern in the Indian army.



Harvesting coffee beans

Kodagu Sidelights

- ◆ Compared to the size of their population, the number of posts held by Kodavas in the armed forces is considerable. Field-Marshal Cariappa and General Thimayya were from Kodagu.
- ◆ Kodagu produces 4 lakh kilos of quality honey annually.
- ◆ Before the British established their rule in Kodagu, there were no roads, not even for carts! People could move only on foot or horseback. The Kodagu *rajas* did not construct roads for fear of invasion. The first road, built by the British, was opened in 1835 from Kulshalnagar to Madikeri.
- ◆ The Nagarahole National Park spread over 571 sq km is located here on the banks of the Lakshmanatirtha, a tributary of the Kaveri.



Field-Marshal Cariappa

The Royal Secret



Long, long ago there lived a jolly good king. He had a liking for food and savoured all the tasty dishes that his dozen cooks could offer him. Often, the king would walk down the streets of his realm, disguised as a commoner, to find out if someone was eating something that he had never tasted.

It so happened that one day, as the king was enjoying one such stroll, escorted by a trusted attendant, the aroma of some delicious preparations wafted to his long sensitive nose. They followed it and came to a tumble-down dwelling.

"Such mouth-watering smell!" exclaimed the king smacking his lips

and knocking on the door.

"What can I do for you?" answered a kindly old man.

"We are but two weary wayfarers and we seek some shelter from the cold of the night," replied the king, in the accent of a rustic.

"Do come in and make yourselves comfortable in our little hut," said the man welcoming them.

As they entered, they saw a pot on the oven. The old man's wife was busy cooking.

Soon the guests were offered two dishful of the steaming food. Both happily relished it.

"Gentle Friends," asked the king with an appeased smile, "what is the



over a pouchful of gold to the kindly couple for their hospitality.

On their way back to the palace, the king told his servant in a stern tone: "Listen, on no account should you open your mouth to anyone that I relish chaff! If you do, mind you, your head shall simply disappear!"

"Your Majesty, I promise to keep this the most carefully guarded secret in my life!" replied the attendant feigning great seriousness.

From then on, the king sent his trusted attendant every day to the poor couple's home to bring him a bowlful of chaff-porridge in exchange of some pieces of gold. All this was executed in extreme secrecy. For the couple, the transaction remained a mystery.

The king's attendant felt very proud indeed that he knew a most guarded secret of his master. But as time passed, he found it more and more difficult to keep it a secret. He would not get any sleep and lost his appetite. Day by day, he began to grow lean and thin. His wife wondered what was wrong but, despite her query, he dared not disclose his problem to her lest he should lose his head.

He tried his best to forget it but, alas, the more he tried, the more restless he became. 'If only I could speak out the secret where no one heard me, then surely I'd be cured of my unusual ailment,' he at last told himself.

At first he decided to tell the river,

item that you fed us today? Such a delicacy I had never tasted!"

"O good travellers, where do you come from? What you partook now was nothing else but a porridge of simple chaff!" replied the old lady, feeling rather amused.

"Mere chaff! O la la!" chuckled the king's attendant.

"Keep quiet!" gestured his master.

"But...Your Majesty, chaff is the food for horses, cows and pigs! You are our king!" whispered the servant impatiently.

"Nevertheless, it tasted delicious!" said the other firmly.

Before daybreak, the two strangers took leave of their host. But the generous ruler did not forget to hand



but feared that the fishermen would hear him. He thought of speaking it aloud in the open valley, but the naughty shepherds would surely come to know of it. His days grew more and more agonising and finally one morning he went into the deep woods. To his great joy he found a tree with a large hollow in its trunk.

"There can't be a safer listener than this!" he happily exclaimed.

Quickly thrusting his head in the gaping hollow, he whispered and went on whispering to his heart's content :

Our King eats chaff!

Tra la la la...!

Our King eats chaff!

Tra la la la...!

From that moment onwards a great relief came into him. He got back his sleep and appetite and there was now

a spring in his gait.

Days passed into months and months into a year. The annual festival of drums approached and the little realm wore a colourful look. But the chief drummer proposed that the big old royal drum be replaced by a new one for the great event.

Orders were sent to the drum-makers. They went to the woods in search of suitable timber. It so happened that they selected the very tree with a hollow in the trunk to which the attendant had confided the royal secret. The tree was felled and indeed a beautiful drum was carved out of its wood. The king himself saw it and was satisfied,

The day of the festival dawned at last. The people of the little realm gathered, donned in their best attires.



The king was to inaugurate the fanfare by beating the new royal drum. He appeared on the dais accompanied by the queen. Picking up the sticks wrapped in gold, the king beat the drum amidst pin-drop silence. But the sound that emanated from the drum took everyone by utter surprise.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

Our King eats chaff!

Tra la la la...!

Our King eats chaff!

Tra la la la...!

Boom! Boom! Boom!

The king was petrified and the queen collapsed in a faint. The subjects, unable to believe their ears, exclaimed: "Does His Majesty turn into a cow or a horse at times?"

"My dear people, it matters little whether I occasionally turn into a horse or a cow! I am your King and let the carnival continue as usual," said the jolly good ruler gathering himself and hurriedly retired to the palace.

Soon the trusted attendant was summoned to his presence.

"I think you were the only one to know of my secret!" the king observed sternly.

"Yes, Your Majesty, nor have I shared it with another human being," replied the servant truthfully, trembling in fear.

"Then how come the drum came to know of it?" questioned the other.

"My Lord, unable to contain myself any longer, I spoke out the secret into the hollow of the tree with whose wood the drum has been made," confessed the fellow, almost seeing his severed head in front of him.

The jolly good king was amused. He pardoned the attendant. But now that the great secret was out, he invited the poor old couple to the palace. There they lived and cooked for their master the delicious chaff which he relished with delight for the rest of his days.

—Retold by Anup Kishore Das



A woman P.M. after 100 years of voting rights

On December 8, Mrs. Jenny Shipley was sworn in as the first woman Prime Minister of New Zealand. Interestingly, that country was the first self-governing nation in the world to grant voting rights to women. This happened in 1893, when the Parliament passed the Electoral Bill and created history.

Born in 1952, Jennifer Robson took her Teacher's Degree and worked as a school teacher from 1972 to 1976. Having married a farmer, she had also to lend a helping hand on the farm. But her real interest was something else—politics. She took advice from her friends. Ultimately a neighbour, who was also a farmer's wife, prompted her to join the National Party, in 1975. She was so active that the leader, Mr. Jim Bogler, noticed the leadership qualities in her even at an early stage. At the same time, there lurked a fear in him that she might pose a challenge to him when the time came! It did, towards the closing months of 1997.

Ten years ago, in 1987, Mrs. Shipley was elected Member of Parliament. In 1990, Mr. Bogler became Prime Minister after entering into an alliance with the New Zealand First Party, making its leader, Mr. Winston Peters, the Deputy

Premier. Mr. Bogler chose Mrs. Shipley as his Minister for Social Welfare, nourishing a secret hope that she would cut the welfare budget and thus become unpopular and might not, after all, prove a threat to him! Apparently, he was wrong. People were burning her effigies, but she went ahead with reforms. In 1993, she was made Minister for Health. Despite all-round criticism, she initiated far-reaching reforms. And in 1996, she was

promoted Minister for Transport. Again, unmindful of criticism, she introduced reforms in crucial areas. She knew that her popularity was on the wane, but she waited for an opportune moment to strike.

That moment came when Mr. Bogler was away from New Zealand. She managed to secure the support of a majority of the MPs belonging to the National Party,

which demanded Mr. Bogler's resignation as Prime Minister, which he did after about a month, clearing the way for Mrs. Shipley to succeed him.

She now held negotiations with the coalition partner - the New Zealand First Party - and retained Mr. Peters as Deputy Premier, and offered the post of Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade to Mr. Bogler. He accepted.

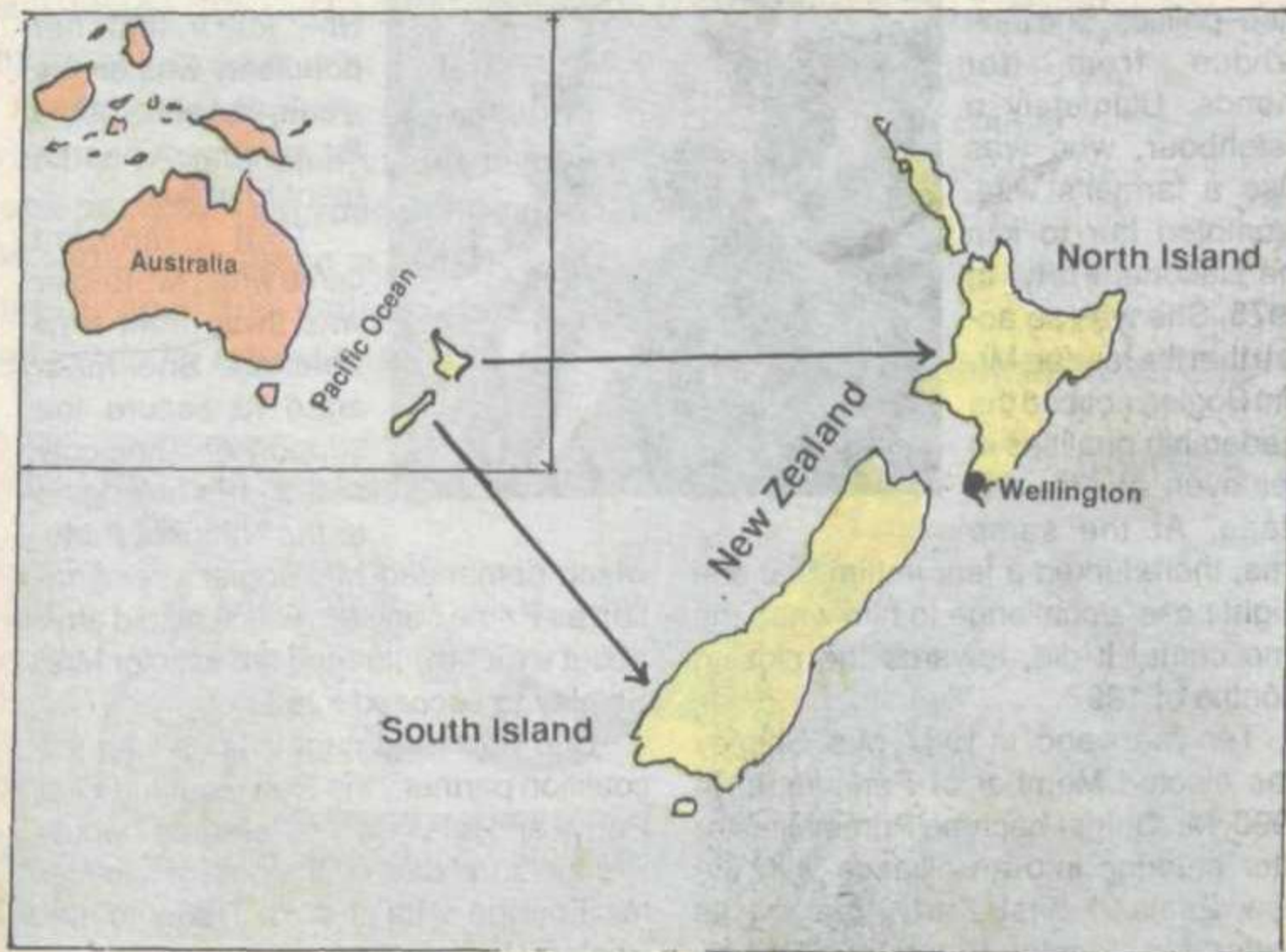


The new Prime Minister announced a five point programme, which includes enhancement of family and community values, reducing the expenditure of the Parliament by cutting down the number of members from the present 120, and greater priority for education, children's health, and tax cuts. She has already exhibited that she has a clear view of "what she wants and what she wants her Ministers to achieve".

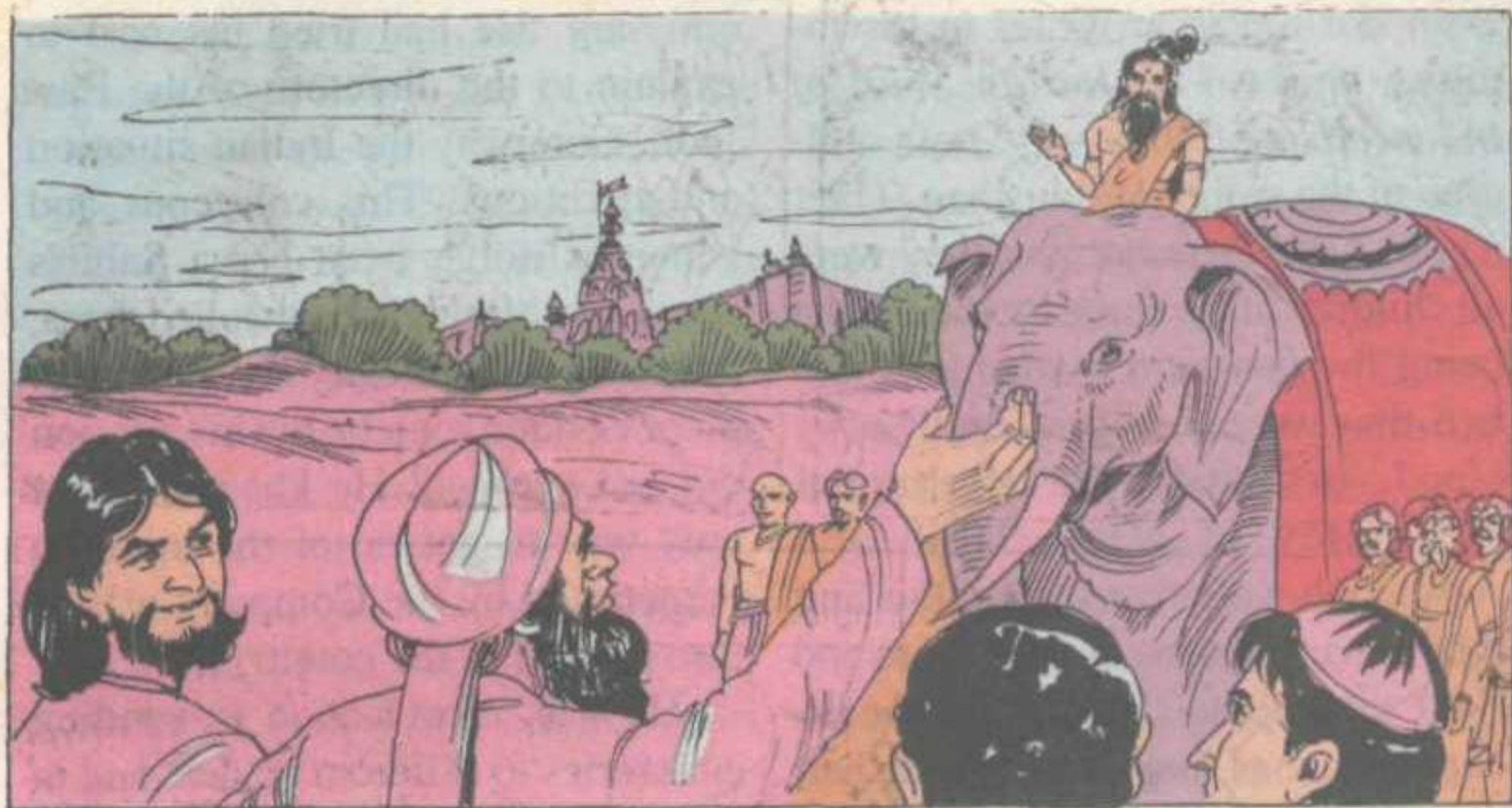
New Zealand will go to the polls in 1999 and opinion-makers even now point out that the opposition Labour Party has an edge over the coalition. And the Leader of the Opposition happens to be another woman—Mrs. Helen Clarke. It looks as though the country will have a spell of rule by women Prime Ministers. Readers may recollect that Israel, Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Canada, and Turkey have had women Prime Ministers.

Fact File

Location: New Zealand lies in the South Pacific Ocean with the Tasmanian Sea separating it from Australia. It consists of two large islands - North and South - and numerous small islands. **Population:** 3,600,000. **Capital:** Wellington. **Language:** English and the Maori tribal dialect. **Postscript:** New Zealand is the least corrupt country in the world, according to Transparency International of Berlin. Next come Denmark, Sweden, Finland, and Canada. Singapore, in the seventh place, is the least corrupt country in Asia.



The Saga of 1857



The narration so far: Air of rebellion against the foreign rulers, popularly called the Ferringhees, pervaded several regions of India. While Nana Sahib was coronated the King of the Marathas at Cawnpore, Rani Lakshmibai of Jhansi, whose kingdom had been taken over by the East India Company, declared independence and notified the British officers stationed there to leave Jhansi. They did not. As a result, their fort was seized and they were wiped out.

It was evening. A *Fakir* or a Muslim holy man was walking towards the east, in the company of half a dozen followers. A *Sadhu* or a Hindu holy man, seated on an elephant and also surrounded by his *Chelas* or obedient disciples, was heading in the opposite direction.

"*Din, din!*" uttered the Fakir, looking at the Sadhu, raising his hand in a certain manner.

"*Bom, bom!*" responded the Sadhu

with a similar gesture. The Fakir smiled and the Sadhu dismounted from the elephant. Both embraced each other and, breaking away from their followers, sat down on a rock and were absorbed in discussion.

Were they exchanging religious ideas? No. They were informing each other about their success or failure in inciting the people against the foreign rulers, how many Rajas and landlords and other influential men they had

6. THE BATTLE OF CAWNPORE

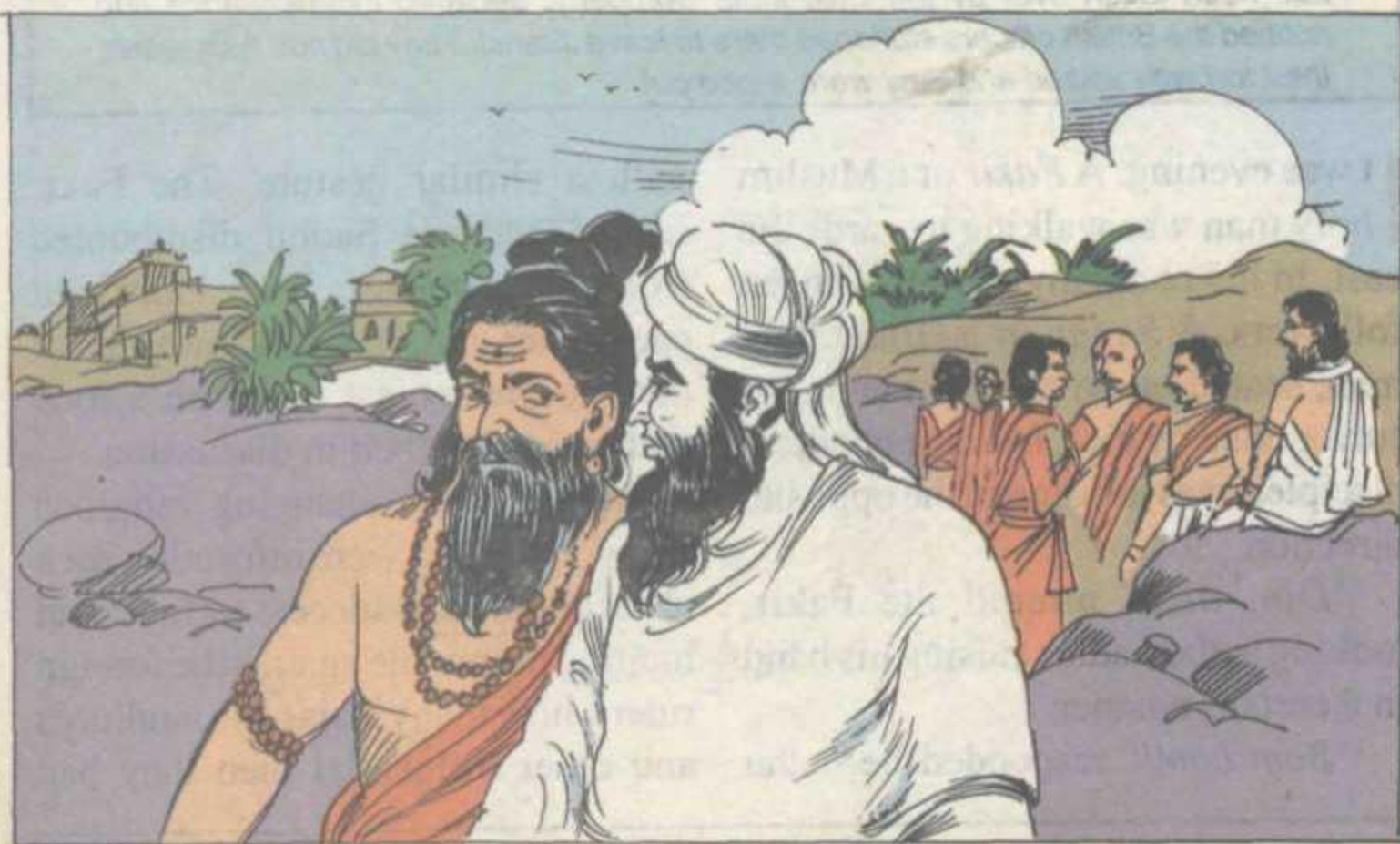
met and the assurance of help they had received.

Hindus and Muslims were united in their struggle, for, as Vinayak Damodar Savarkar writes in his famous book, *The Indian War of Independence*, "they were both children of the soil of Hindusthan. Their names were different, but they were all children of the same mother; India being the common mother of these two, they were, therefore, brothers by blood... In short, the broad features of the policy of Nana Sahib and Azimullah were that the Hindus and the Mohammedans should unite and fight shoulder to shoulder for the independence of their country and that, when freedom was gained, the United States of India should be formed under the Indian rulers and princes."

Azimullah Khan, an extremely intelligent and handsome young man, well-versed in English and French, had visited England as Nana Sahib's emissary. He had tried his best to explain to the directors of the East India Company the Indian situation and traditions. This courteous and generous noble from Nana Sahib's court, in glitteringly bejewelled dress, aroused great curiosity and sympathy in the London society, but his mission did not succeed. He knew that the only way to get rid of the injustice perpetrated by the Company was to throw it out of the country.

He was most active in sending emissaries to different leaders and in organising secret revolutionary groups here and there.

The liberation of Cawnpore and



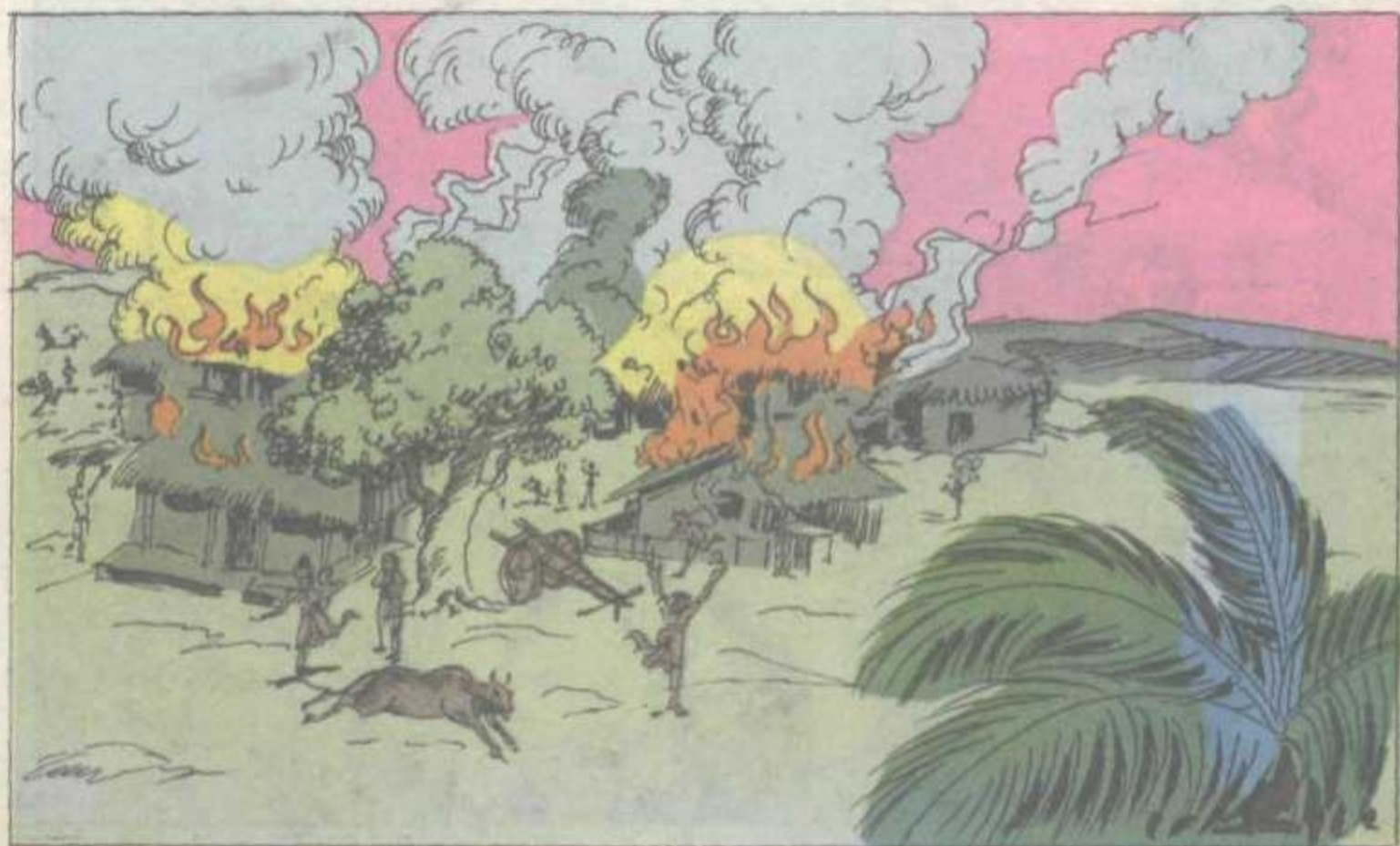
the coronation of Nana Sahib were the biggest blows to the prestige of the rulers. The British Government sent one of its most capable generals, Havelock, to command the army against Nana Sahib. The news of the massacre of the British on the river-ghat at Cawnpore had reached Havelock. He marched towards Cawnpore, leading a battalion of one thousand English soldiers and hundreds of Indians, with a grim determination to avenge the massacre. Alas, he proved absolutely merciless. On his march, he not only plundered and burnt down villages, but also killed any Indian who came to his sight.

Take the example of the town of Fatehgarh. At first, Havelock let loose his soldiers on the households, allow-

ing them to plunder anything they liked. Then all the houses in the town were set fire to, with the people inside them.

Nana Sahib got the news of Havelock's brutal onward march. Some of his well-wishers advised him to abandon Cawnpore and retreat, and to wait for a better opportunity to fight the British. But Nana Sahib decided to face the enemy. "Even if defeat comes to us, it will come only after inflicting losses on the enemy. That itself will be a gain," he said.

As Havelock's army approached Cawnpore, Nana Sahib's soldiers came out in the open. Nana Sahib himself was in command. But Havelock took recourse to an unexpected strategy. While Nana Sahib's soldiers were pushing forward headlong, the



British soldiers suddenly parted, leaving the front empty, and attacked the defenders of the city from the left and right sides. Nana Sahib had not anticipated this. Even though he fought bravely, again and again bringing his confused soldiers together, the better trained British soldiers, with their superior firearms, crushed the Indians.

When the sound of guns, battle cries, and screams were silenced and dusk began to fall, Havelock asked his men to look for Nana Sahib. They searched for him among the dead and the injured and thereafter in the houses and temples in the city. But the leader was not to be found. He had escaped—and had done so carrying with him a huge quantity of wealth and a few faithful companions. This was all that

Havelock could learn.

Havelock was disappointed. Then began his brutal act of revenge. Hundreds of Brahmins were rounded up. Among them were scholars, teachers, priests, and noblemen. Their hands tied, they were dragged or pushed into the deserted Company fort. Floors of the building were still covered with patches of dry blood. They were English blood. The prisoners were made to lie down and lick the blood. Not that they were to be set free after this humiliation. They were, of course, killed. But the victorious enemy had the satisfaction that the victims had lost their religion before dying, by licking the blood of those who belonged to another faith.

An English author, Charles Ball, writes in his book titled *Indian*



Mutiny : " General Havelock began to wreak a terrible vengeance for the death of Sir Hugh Wheeler. Batch upon batch of natives mounted the scaffold. The calmness of mind and nobility of demeanour which some of the Revolutionaries showed at the time of death was such as would do credit to those who martyred themselves for devotion to a principle. One of them, who worked as a magistrate at Cawnpore under Nana Sahib, was arrested and put to trial. But, he seemed so indifferent to all the proceedings as if they all referred to someone else and not to him. After he was sentenced to death, he rose and turned his back to the judge and walked with a firm step to the scaffold erected for him; while the *Maungs* were making the final preparations, he was looking at their movements in an easy and natural manner. And without the least agitation, he mounted the scaffold even

as a Yogi enters *Samadhi*! Fortified by the assurances of his creed, death to him was but a transition from the hated association of the infidel Ferringhees to the blissful enjoyment of paradise."

There was jubilation in the Company's camps as Cawnpore was reconquered. But there was bad news for them, flowing in from far and near. The city of Delhi was in turmoil. There was unrest in Lucknow. Reports of revolts were coming from Bihar.

"How long can the Company's raj continue?" was the question uppermost in the minds of many Englishmen in India and in Britain. They were justified in their doubts. Had the Rajas of India been united in their effort to shake off the foreign yoke, what began as a Sepoy Mutiny would have secured India's independence. But that was not to be.

— To continue





Pushkar Mela

Pushkar, a little temple town in Rajasthan, is an important place of pilgrimage. It is also the venue of the largest fair in the world, dedicated solely to camels. Tens of days before the full moon of the month of Kartik (Oct/Nov) every year, the desert trails leading to Pushkar are filled with long camel trains. Camels are



© 1997 UBC Feature World. All rights reserved

adorned, exhibited, bought, and sold at the festival. Camel races are also held.

For the tourist in search of souvenirs, the fair offers a variety of handicraft, such as embroidered slippers, wall hangings, paintings, and jewellery. Incredibly fine samples of wood carvings, carpets, blue pottery and porcelain beads are very popular. The favourites are bottles and lampshades made from camel parchment artistically painted in scarlet, gold, and emerald green. All these handicrafts are exquisitely unique pieces of art untouched by machines. For those in search of art and entertainment, puppet shows, plays, songs, and dances are only some of the wide variety of the performing arts featured at Pushkar.

—Shital

Marutta

~ The king who defied the demon-monarch Ravana ~

King Marutta, by meditating on Shiva, pleased the great God and, with his blessings, discovered a huge quantity of gold in the Himalayas.

He then began performing a Yajna. While the rites were going on in full swing, Ravana, the monarch of Lanka and most powerful demon of the time, was wandering from land to land. Whenever he came across a king, he would challenge him to a fight. The king would either accept Ravana's supremacy without a battle, or go and fight with him. And if they fought, they were invariably defeated.

The moment Ravana saw Marutta, he shouted : "Surrender to me or fight and die!"

The Gods who were present there grew nervous at Ravana's sight. They changed themselves into birds and beasts and watched the situation from a distance.

"Who are you, stranger?" asked Marutta.

Ravana was surprised that the king did not know him. He introduced himself as Kubera's younger brother and said : "I'm the hero who defeated Kubera and snatched his heavenly chariot, the *Pushpaka*."

"And you call yourself a hero? What kind of hero are you?" laughed the king. "A fellow who takes credit for defeating his elder brother is only a shameless bully! Come on, let me quickly send you to the abode of death."

King Marutta raised his bow.

Ravana stood stunned. He had never met with such audacity. But as both prepared for a fight, the sage Samvartaka told Marutta : "The rule of the Yajna is, the performer should never get angry while the rites are on. By growing angry, you're already defeated."

King Marutta lowered his bow. Sage Sukracharya told Ravana that since Marutta kept his bow down, Ravana could be said to have won!

Ravana went his way. Thus a fight was averted.

King Marutta completed his Yajna. He had so much gold that he could not spend everything during his life-time. He deposited them in a cave in the Himalayas. Later, Yudhishtira found them and spent them on performing a great Yajna.



DO YOU KNOW?

HERE'S THE NEWS...

—Shital

© 1997 UBC Feature World. All rights reserved



Around the fifth century B.C. in Rome, people used to send newsletters to those living away from the capital to keep them informed about happenings. In 60 B.C., Julius Caesar regulated this. A daily bulletin for posting in the Forum was published by his government. It was called *Acta Diurna*, meaning 'daily happening'. The first regular newspaper, which is close to what we have today, appeared in London in 1663 and was called the *Intelligencer*. In America, *Public Occurrences* was started in 1690 in Boston. By the time of the

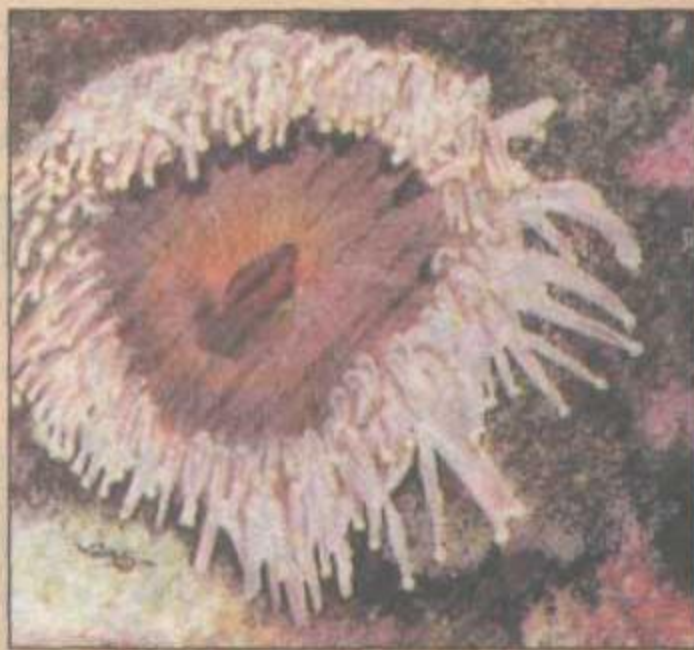
American Civil War, people were so keen on newspapers that as many as 37 of them were being published around that time.

RAINBOW

Living Flowers

—Shital

Sea anemones live attached to rocks and breakwaters on the seashore, and in shallow waters. When the tide is out, they seem to be just blobs of jelly, but when submerged under water, they look like flowers. The reason for this is that they have a frill of short petal-like tentacles around the top of their jar-like bodies which have no supporting skeletal structure. In spite of this, and their name, sea anemones are not plants, but animals. They are flesh eaters, that feed on any small creature which brushes against its tentacles. Sea anemones have some close relatives that are able to use minerals, like calcium, from the water to build a hard skeleton for themselves. These are called corals.



© 1997 UBC Feature World. All rights reserved

A WAKE-UP CALL!

★ *What is the meaning of "Cock-a-doodle-doo", which I often find in storybooks? asks P. Srinivasa Rao of Sreekurmam, Andhra Pradesh.*

This word formation is only an imitation of the crowing of a cock, especially early morning, like a wake-up call! The figure of speech is called 'Onomatopoeia' or the use of words whose sounds help suggest the meaning. Like 'meow', 'tweet-tweet', and 'chugh-chugh'.

★ *Recently I have frequently come across the phrase 'horse-trading' on TV and in newspapers. I would like to know its meaning, writes R.V. Uday Bhaskar from Visakhapatnam.*

It means hard bargaining, indulged in while buying and selling horses to be used for racing. In politics, if one political party attempts to wean away a member belonging to a rival party, a price is demanded by that member or offered to him or her. Such an activity invariably involves hard bargaining which may even end up in a place in the ministry or a position of status, not to speak of monetary benefits.

★ *What is the difference between "guarantee" and "warranty"? asks S.R. Gulukota, of Karimnagar.*

Practically nothing, as both mean an assurance given by, say, the seller of a product of its quality and life to the buyer. These days products like wrist watch, radio, TV, fridge, fan, air-conditioner, etc, come with a guarantee from the manufacturers, assuring the buyer that they would replace the whole unit or a part if anything were to go wrong in its working, or agreeing to repair the unit free of cost within a stipulated period. Probably the written or printed guarantee can be called a warranty.

UNCLE SAM—Contributed by R. Gopalakrishnan

You would have come across references to the U.S.A., its Government, or its citizens by the expression Uncle Sam. How did it come about?

Mr. Samuel Wilson (1766-1854) was a resident of the city of Troy, in the state of New York. He was widely known as Uncle Sam. He was an Inspector employed by the Government; his job was to pack meat into barrels. After packing, he stamped his initials 'U.S.' on the barrels. During 1812-1814, England had a confrontation with the U.S.A. The newspaper *Troy Post* on September 7, 1813 made a reference to the government by the familiar 'Uncle Sam', as the initials of United States and Uncle Sam are the same. The practice has since caught on, and Uncle Sam has come to mean the United States.

Fulfilment of wish



Vamanapuram taluk had just about four or five villages. There was only one *purohit* for all the villages, and so Krishna Shastri was a popular figure. As he knew astrology, people approached him for suggesting an auspicious date and time for ceremonies like marriage. He was remunerated for all such services and assistance, and he soon became rich.

Krishna Shastri's only daughter was Radha. When she grew up, she turned out to be not only beautiful but intelligent, too. Shastri gave her good education, and she was talented in all the arts that she learnt. Being an only child, Radha was naturally expected to inherit all her father's wealth.

Many of their neighbours and acquaintances cherished a desire to make her their daughter-in-law. Some of

them called on Krishna Shastri with proposals of marriage. "Whoever weds my daughter," Shastri would stipulate his conditions, "should know all the four Vedas by-heart, have studied all the six Shastras, and be well-versed in all the sixty-four arts. He should stay with me and my daughter, and lead the life of a *purohit*. Do you think your son has all these qualifications?"

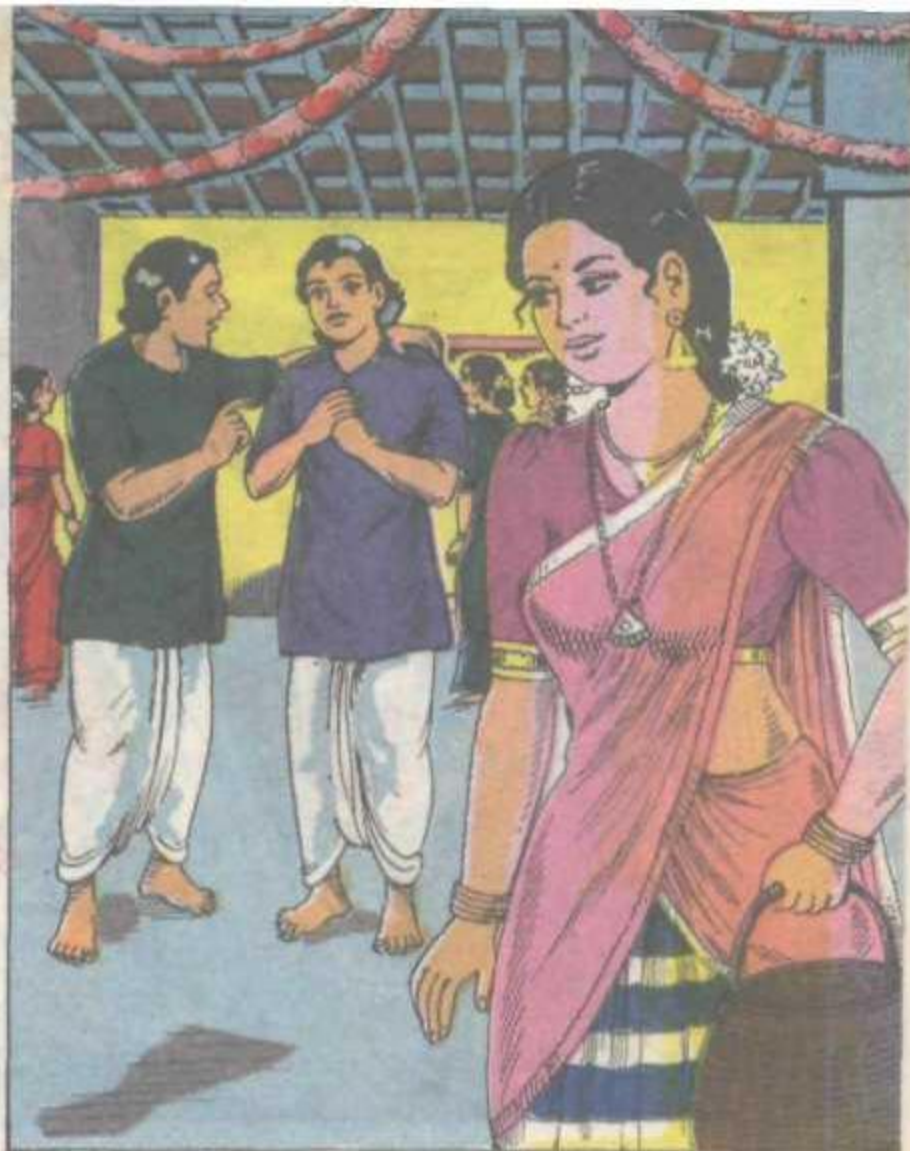
None of those who went with proposals could answer him and returned without uttering another word. They spread a rumour that Shastri was putting forth impossible conditions which nobody would be able to fulfil. So much so, many others decided not to go to him with any proposals. Nobody dared to.

About that time, in a village in the

adjacent Ganeshapuram taluk, there was a wedding in a family related to Krishna Shastri. He sent his wife and daughter to attend the ceremony. The bridegroom's party had a youngster called Radheyshyam. His job was to assist the village chief as his accountant. He was not only handsome, but educated, capable, and knowledgeable. Unfortunately, he did not come from any affluent family, and was not in a position to command even minimum comforts.

During the marriage ceremony, Radheyshyam happened to meet Radha. Till he saw her, he never had any thought of marriage, as he was fully aware of his circumstances. But, now, he began dreaming of a married life. He wished to marry Radha and confided in his friend. "Do you know who she is?" his friend, the bridegroom, asked. "She is the only daughter of the famous purohit Krishna Shastri. He is not of the ordinary type. On the contrary, he is rolling in wealth. A lot of rich people are nourishing a desire to get her as their daughter-in-law. But they don't dare go to him with proposals. Because he has stipulated all sorts of impossible conditions. I don't think there is a young man who can meet all his demands. So, don't ever cherish a desire to marry her!"

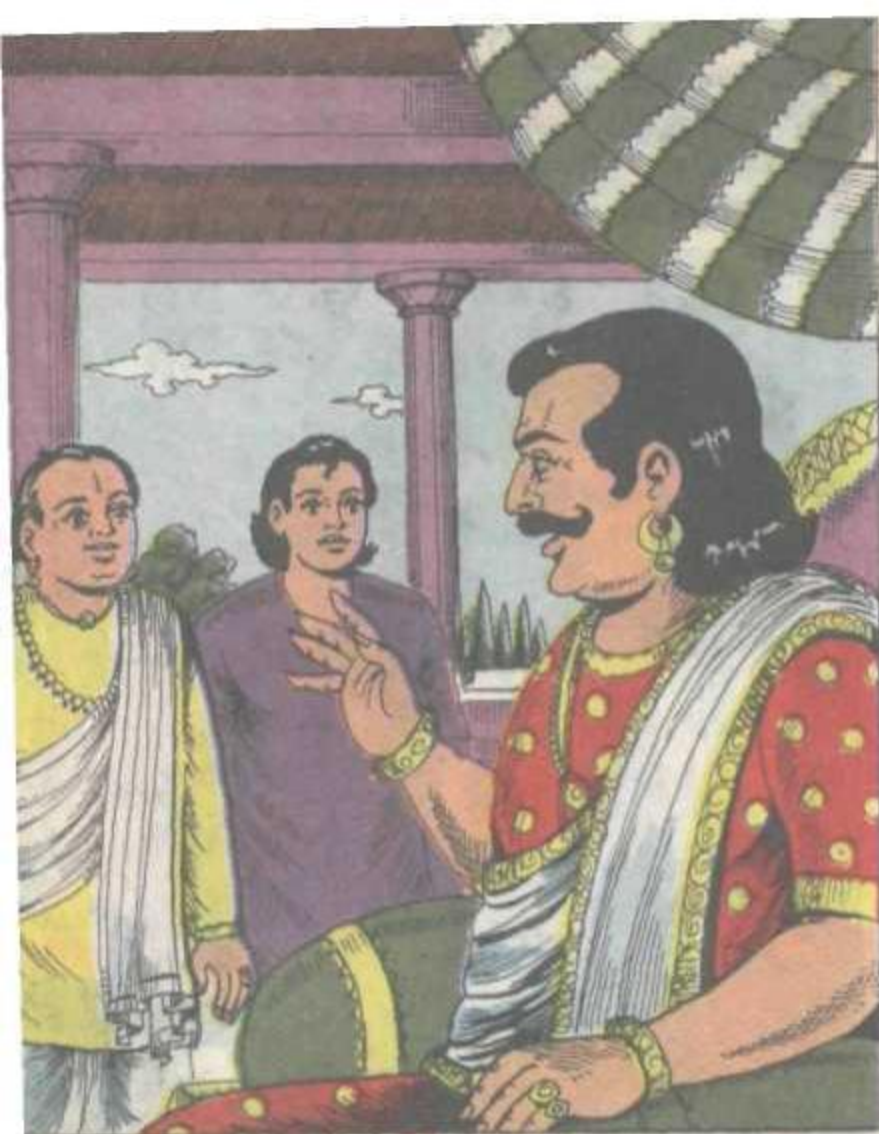
Radheyshyam listened to all that his friend told him and was greatly disappointed. He was, however, convinced that he had no qualifications



to aspire for Radha's hand. He was handsome, all right, but he was poor; he did not know the Shastras well enough to carry on the duties of a purohit. He, therefore, decided to forget that he ever met Radha at all.

Not long after that, the village chief was preparing to celebrate his sixtieth birthday on a grand scale, immediately after the Navratri festivities. He sent word to Krishna Shastri that he and his family should participate in the celebrations and that he very much wished they would reach his place even before the Navratri festival. Also that he was looking forward to Shastri's participation in all the *pujas* and *homam*. The village chief asked Radheshyam to be in





charge of the accommodation for Shastri and his family.

Soon after his arrival in the village, Krishna Shastri began noticing the efficient way Radheyshyam was managing things. He was aware of the confidence the village chief reposed in the young man. Shastri found him carrying out the responsibilities he was entrusted with and how enthusiastic and energetic he was. More than that, the youngster was behaving courteously to everybody. Shastri was highly impressed.

According to the directions given by Krishna Shastri, Radheyshyam got the stage for the birthday celebrations ready and went and requested him to inspect it. Shastri was very happy,

and complimented the young man. He introduced to Shastri the person who had put up the stage. "The work was started at an auspicious hour!" Gurunath boasted. "That's why we were able to complete the work to everybody's satisfaction."

Radheyshyam wanted to clarify a doubt. "But, sir, you started some work at Ramayya's place also on an auspicious day, but then everything went wrong there later. Why?"

Was the young man trying to pull his legs? wondered Gurunath. He went pale. Krishna Shastri looked at Radheshyam for an explanation.

"Ramayya is a poor farmer," he said. "With great difficulty he saved some money after toiling for several hours every day. He wanted to add one more room to his modest house. This Gurunath is in a way related to Ramayya. So, he entrusted the work to him, hoping that he would undertake the work to his satisfaction. Ramayya also pleaded with him to reduce his fee, because they are related to each other. Gurunath could have told him that he would not reduce the fee or he would not undertake the work. Instead, he took up the work and must have used substandard material. When Ramayya queried, Gurunath seems to have told him that the work depended on the fee that was offered. Though the work was started on an auspicious day and time, the room does not look decent at



all. Here, probably, Gurunath is expecting a hefty fee and also rewards from the village chief."

Krishna Shastri looked askance at Gurunath. Before he could respond, Radheyshyam said : "Gurunath, you know construction work. There's nothing like an auspicious day, or days not so auspicious. Every day is a good day. Look at Ashtami, generally considered inauspicious. Yet, Lord Krishna was born on Ashtami day. Similarly, Lord Rama was born on a Navami day. Both of them were incarnations of Lord Vishnu, born on earth to put down evil and protect good. Whenever you do something, you should put your heart and soul into it. And concentrate on the work."

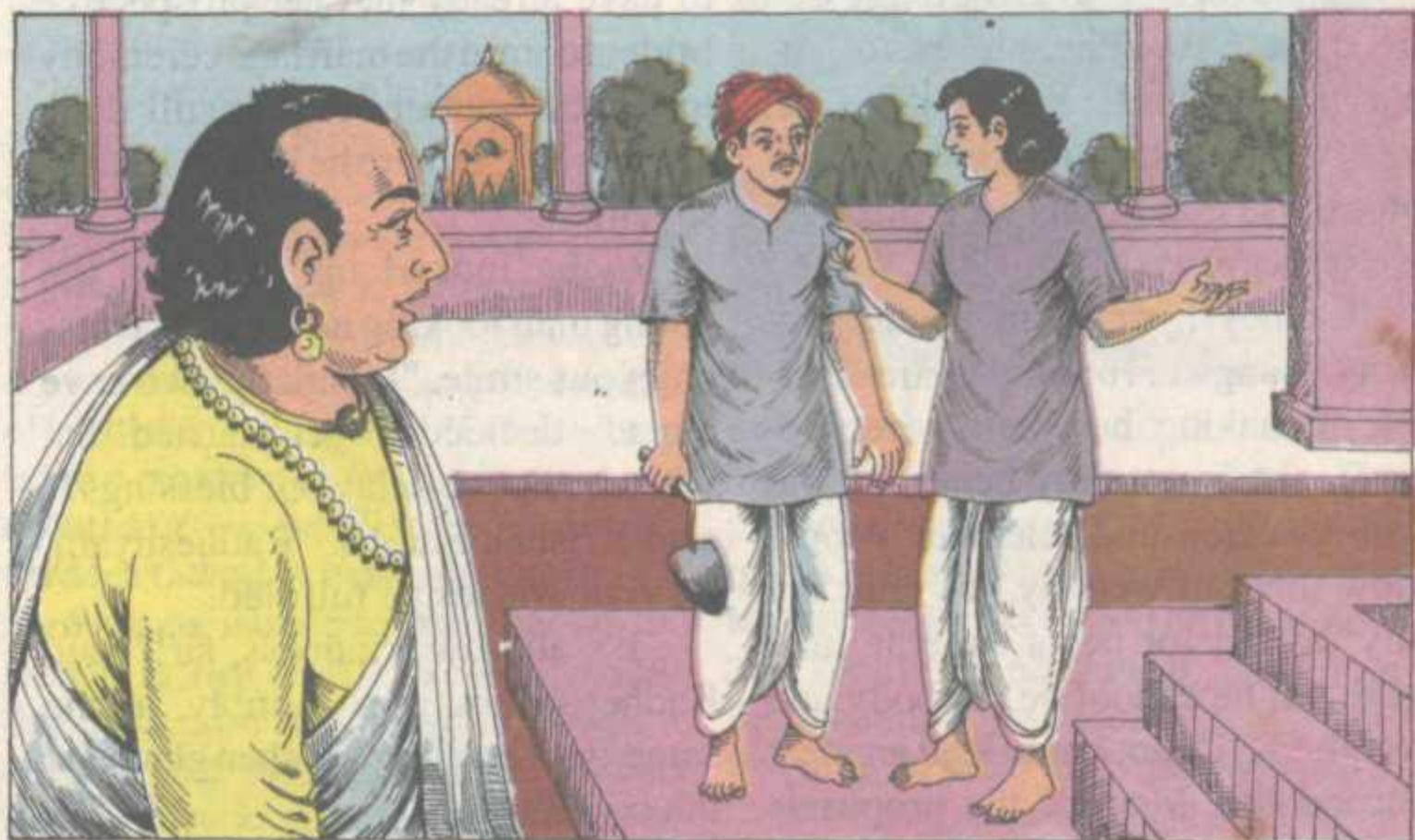
Gurunath left the place without replying Radheyshyam. Shastri

turned to the young man : "Do you mean to say that any work or ceremony can start on any day, any time?"

"Sir, you're a learned purohit and if I've caused any pain by my utterances, please forgive me," said Radheshyam. "These days, everybody is out to make money, and they utilise every opportunity that comes their way. Look at Gurunath himself. For cheating Ramayya, he should have been punished; but even god seems to have closed his eyes to such acts of dishonesty. I think it's our duty to point this out to the people so that they'll be forewarned. Please bear with me if I'm wrong!"

"Though we're poles apart in our views," remarked Krishna Shastri, "your argument has attracted me."

When he heard this from Shastri,



the young man was overjoyed. His face suddenly became very bright, and he was about to say something, but he checked himself. Shastri did not fail to notice it. "Radheyshyam, you wanted to say something? Why did you stop half-way?"

"Nothing special, sir," said Radheyshyam, still hesitating. "You were just now saying that you liked my argument. If I were to ask you something, I'm not sure whether you would like it. That's why I desisted from saying it."

"Don't hesitate," said Krishna Shastri, encouragingly. "Let me hear it."

Radheyshyam then told him how he happened to meet Shastri's daughter Radha at the marriage ceremony in Ganeshapuram, how much he wished to marry her, and how his friend had reacted when he expressed his desire. "Your daughter has all the qualities of a bride. What baffles me, however, is : why should you put out impossible conditions on a prospective bridegroom?"

"Radheyshyam, I'm aware that many youngsters around us are desirous of making her their wife. Because, she is not only beautiful, but well-educated and talented. People know that I'm wealthy. It's only my duty to find for her a suitable husband, but he cannot be anybody and everybody. I want her to lead an ideal married life. Most of the proposals

had come from those who have their eyes on my wealth. I don't have another daughter to be given away in marriage, so all my wealth will naturally go to her. That's why I want to save her from such avaricious people. And that explains the impossible conditions that I have stipulated."

Radheyshyam smiled, as he saw a ray of hope for himself. Just then Shastri's wife and daughter came there. They said they wished to see the stage made for the celebrations. "I'm afraid, we'll have to construct a Kalyana Mandapam (hall for marriage) also next to the stage!" remarked Shastri. There was a wide smile on his face.

His wife looked at him, as if she did not understand what he was aiming at. "Yes, for our Radha's marriage!" Shastri confirmed. "She seems to have already met her prospective bridegroom at the marriage ceremony in Ganeshapuram. If you still don't know who it is, here he is—this Radheyshyam!"

Radha looked up and saw the young man looking at her with a mischievous smile. "I think the two have already decided to get married. So, why should we delay our blessings?" said Krishna Shastri. "Radheshyam, let your wishes be fulfilled!"

"It's all your kindness, sir!" said Radheyshyam very humbly, at the same time stealing another glance at the coy Radha.



NEWS FLASH

Long life—in prison

The maximum punishment meted out for heinous crimes is death sentence or life imprisonment. In many countries, life imprisonment does not mean a jail life till the prisoner's death. He is expected to remain in prison for 21 years, by which time he would have regretted his action and decided to turn a new leaf when he is released, and not lead a life of crime any longer. Society will then accept him. Moses Sital of South Africa was, early last December, sentenced to imprisonment for a total of 2,410 years on charges of 38 murders, six robberies, and 40 crimes against women. Most of this 33-year-old criminal's victims were people between 20 and 30 years. Will he get any remission for "good behaviour" in jail as happens in many countries?

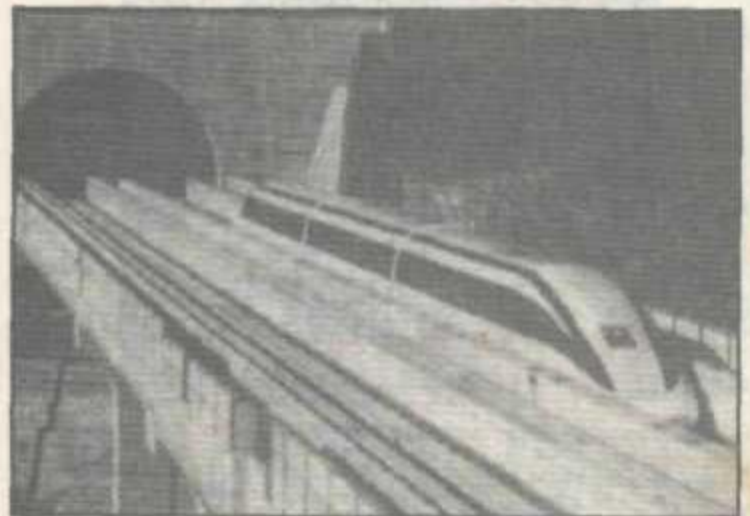
When Turkey slept

Census operations in India take place from the first day of the first year of a new decade, and it takes almost a year for the figures to be compiled and analysed for a provisional report to be presented to the Government. Enumerators visit every home to collect data and if the heads of families are not readily available, they leave a proforma to be duly filled up and collected on a second visit, or even a third visit. That is because, people will normally be away from their homes attending to their work. Turkey had a one-day census on November 30. It was a Sunday, and the Government ordered that nobody should step out of their home,

hospital, hotel, or hostel for 14 hours from 5 a.m. so that the whole exercise could be completed in just one day. The only people out in the streets were the policemen who strictly enforced the order, and the enumerators. The punishment for defying the order was six months in jail! The whole of Turkey thus "slept" for a day, as the report goes. Nobody dared come out on the streets. The next census in India will be from January 1, 2001.

Speed record

An unmanned train in Japan attained the speed of 531km per hour—a world record—on December 6. Named *Maglev*, this sleek-looking train made



the record run on a 18.5km track in Yamanashi prefecture near Tokyo. The previous record was 517 kmph. As we go to press, news has come that Maglev broke the record on December 24, clocking 550kmph, again in Yamanashi.

Some U.S. facts and figures

An average American spent 17 min-

utes in a day in 1996 to read books, 14 minutes to read magazines, and 27 minutes to read a newspaper! Compared to that, he (she) spent 45 minutes to listen to recorded music, and nearly 3 hours in a day to listen to the radio. He (she) watched the TV for more than 4 hours a day. Americans seem to prefer cats to dogs; there were 5,910,000 domesticated cats as against 5,290,000 pet dogs in 1996. Many households kept more than one dog or cat in the homes.

Gold and Silver

Kin Narita and Jin Kani are twin sisters—the oldest in Japan. Kin in Japanese means gold, and Jin silver. And



they were gifted with a pair of golden and silver shoes respectively by a company which makes popular sportskit.

Sorry, left without address

Eleven-year-old Christina Reverussi mailed a letter to Bill Clinton, President of U.S.A., White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington, D.C. The address was hundred per cent correct. The girl had, of course, forgotten to add the ZIP code (like our PIN code). The enve-

lope went back to Christina. It carried the remarks of the delivery post office : Addressee left without forwarding address! When the news came out, the President's office confirmed that he would continue to be a resident of White House till 2001 A.D.

Snip! Snip!

They went on growing for 24 long years; and they were snipped in 20 minutes flat! "They" refers to the world famous nails on the hands of 43-year-old Loretta Adams. Her longest nail was 35 inches long. Loretta had always cherished a hope of getting an entry in the Guinness Book of Records. But when she realised that her prized nail was nowhere near the 76-inch-long nail manicured by an Indian, she decided to have her nails snipped. This was carefully done by a doctor and a beautician, who took only 20 minutes for the operation, done last October. Loretta's great consolation is : she would now be able to do a lot of things which she had very much wished to during the last 20 odd years but was unable to because of her growing nails! Of course, the nails would now remain her proud possession inside a jewel-box.



Pearls from poetry



Mangalpuri village had a famous poet, Manjunath. His poems were very popular - especially the humorous ones, which attracted many admirers. The zamindar of the place, Dinkar, however, had reservations about the poems. He often criticised them when he discussed them with his friends.

He became jealous of Manjunath, because he was becoming more and more popular day by day. However, as the zamindar, it was part of his functions to honour writers, poets, and *pundits* every now and then. If he failed, he was afraid, he might become unpopular with the villagers. So, he continued to give away awards and rewards, even to those whom he did not favour, like Manjunath. At the same time, he found ways and

opportunities to harass them otherwise. Manjunath was no exception.

He had farm lands which he had handed to some farmers to cultivate and give him a part of the yield as rent. This came to nearly a hundred bags every year. Dinkar managed to get them to his side and made them give only ten bags on the pretext that the yield was low because of drought.

He thought of yet another method to insult Manjunath. The annual awards to writers and others comprised gold-laced shawls. Dinkar modified this to ordinary silk shawls. And for Manjunath, he decided to give him only a shawl made of coarse handloom cloth. Manjunath did not protest, but gracefully accepted what was given to him.

As he had no other means of



income, Manjunath would always look forward to the award ceremony, hoping that like others, he too would receive gold coins. But when the practice was stopped, Manjunath found himself in a predicament, as he had no wherewithal even for meeting his daily needs.

One day, a pundit named Vednarayan came to Mangalpur. He was from Simhapur. His discourses and speeches impressed Dinkar very much. "Please don't hesitate, but you may ask for whatever you wish to have."

"Our king has expressed a desire to meet poet Manjunath of your village," replied Vednarayan. "He has asked me to take Manjunath with me

when I go back to Simhapur. You must allow him to go with me. That's all that I ask for!"

"I'm really surprised, pundit," said Dinkar. "Usually people want only gold, silver, or precious stones. But, you're asking for a poet! How strange! No, I've absolutely no objection to Manjunath accompanying you to Simhapur."

"Our king is generous," added Vednarayan, "and I've had the privilege of receiving gold and diamonds from him as reward. In fact, I consider it beneath my dignity and a slur on me if I were to accept gold and other gifts from any other country. It'll affect our prestige. Therefore, I plead with you not to give me anything like gold or other riches. Just send Manjunath with me."

Dinkar calculated that Manjunath, who was suffering from acute poverty, would only be too eager to ask for gold and precious stones from the King of Simhapur and thus bring discredit to Mangalpur. People would then ridicule him and soon his popularity would diminish. "All right, tell me, what does your king expect from Manjunath?"

"Our country is rich in many ways," explained Vednarayan. "Moreover, it enjoys peace and tranquillity. Our king wants Manjunath to compose poems about our country."

Dinkar knew that Manjunath was not the type to write poems in praise of



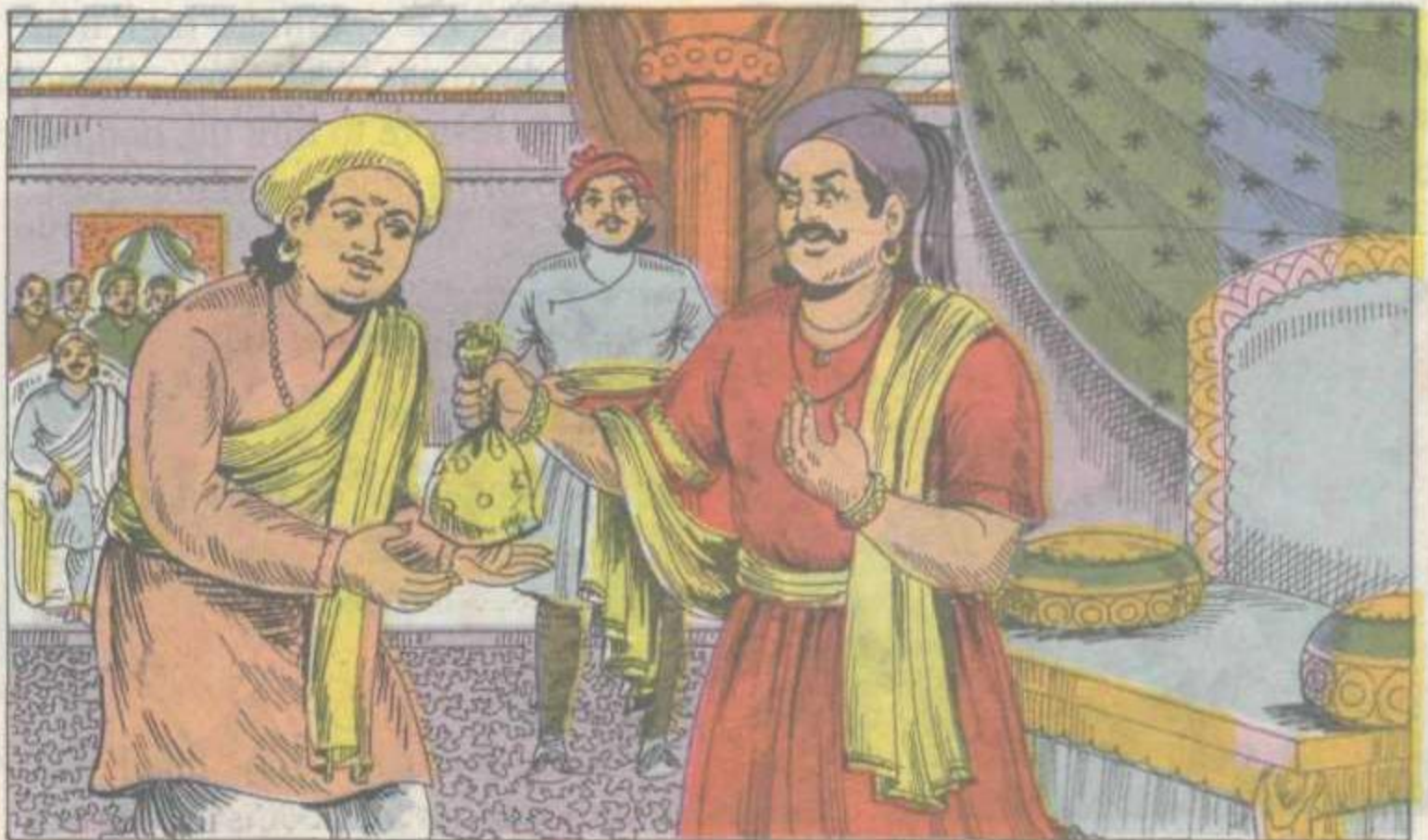
anyone. He, therefore, did not expect him to go with Vednarayan just to compose poems. However, contrary to the zamindar's guess, Manjunath got ready to go to Simhapur. As the pundit and the poet took leave of Dinkar, the zamindar remarked: "Just as you had protected the prestige of Simhapur, I'm sure Manjunath would also keep up the prestige and tradition of this village." He then looked at Manjunath as if there was a special message for him in what he said.

As soon as they reached Simhapur, Vednarayan took him to the king, who received the famous poet with due reverence and courtesy. In the next few days, Manjunath noticed the prosperity of Simhapur and the peace enjoyed by the people of that country. He composed several poems

eulogising the country and its people, and the way it was being ruled. Every day, he recited his poems in the court, and the king was very pleased. One day, he asked Manjunath: "What would you wish to have in token of this country's gratitude?"

"Your majesty! Rulers of kingdoms are bound to honour pundits and learned people and give them whatever they wish for; that's the tradition," said Manjunath. "However, it's not the practice with such people to ask for rewards and awards. I shall also not ask for anything; it's not proper. Whatever your majesty feels like giving, I shall accept it gladly."

"Whatever I give will never be an adequate reward for your poetry," said the King of Simhapur. "Anyway, please accept this bag of precious



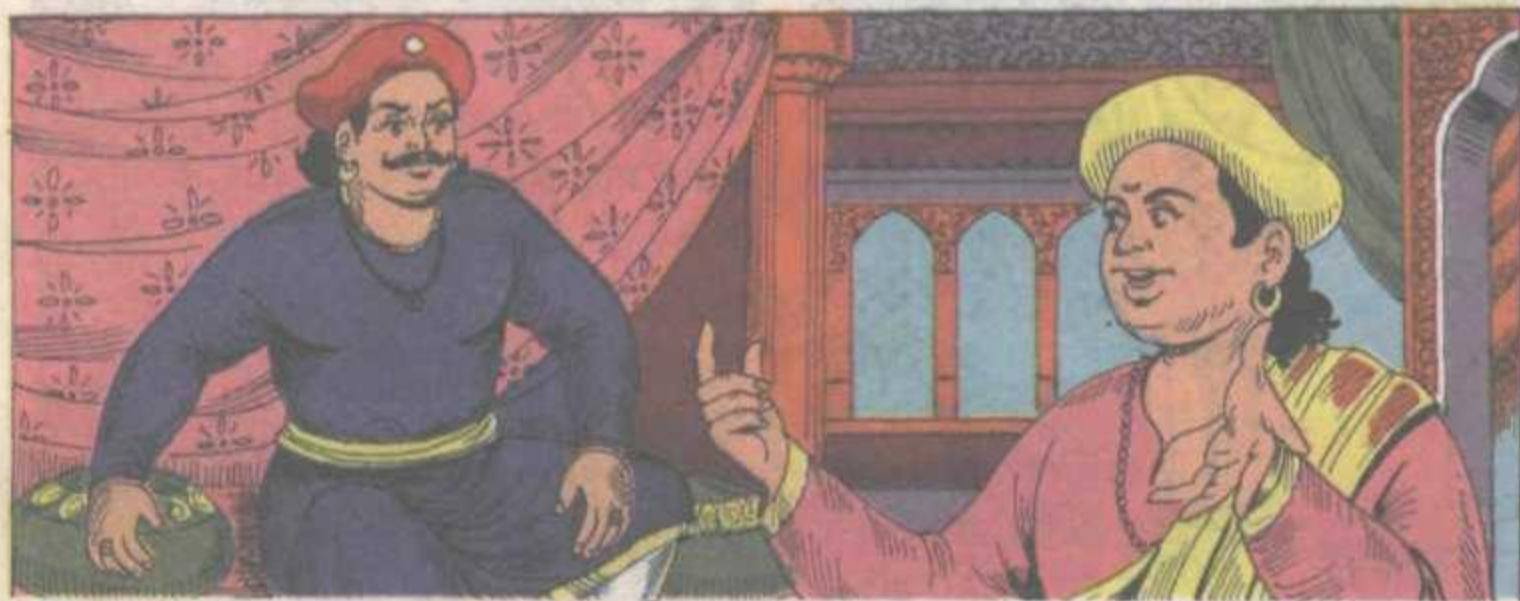
stones. I know that you deserve much more than this."

Manjunath took leave of the king and Vednarayan and returned to Mangalपुरi. A few days later, the zamindar called on him. Manjunath showed him the gift he received from the King of Simhapur. The zamindar realised that the precious stones, if sold, would fetch enough wealth for seven generations in the poet's family. The jealous zamindar was peeved. "Vednarayan refused to accept any gift from me or from this village, and thus kept up the prestige of his country. You've brought discredit to Mangalपुरi by accepting rewards from Simhapur!"

"Sir, I haven't done anything of that sort," said Manjunath with great pride. "Simhapur has no poet of my stature. That's why the king asked pundit Vednarayan to invite a poet like me to that country. And remember, he did seek your permission before he even mentioned it to me, and you gladly

gave him leave to invite me, which was an honour not only to me but to Mangalपुरi. And I didn't ask the king for any reward or award. He was happy with my poems and appreciated the way I wrote about Simhapur and its prosperous and peace-loving people. Some of the words and verses in my poems dropped like globulets on that country; some others have dropped on this village, too. In Simhapur, the droplets fell on oysters and turned into pearls, and came into my hands. Those that fell on Mangalपुरi flowed into the soil. That was the difference." Manjunath put the whole thing very poetically.

Dinkar felt that he had received a whiplash. He understood what the poet meant, that while his poetry received approbation in another country, it was not appreciated in his own village. The zamindar regretted his attitude towards Manjunath, and decided to restore to him the honour he gave to all the others of Mangalपुरi.



Sports Snippets

Golden Ball

Ronaldo of Brazil has won this year's 'Golden Ball' for the best footballer playing for the European Cup. He is the first South American and the youngest (21 years) footballer ever to win this coveted recognition. Meanwhile, he is one of the four footballers who have been shortlisted for the title "Player of the Year" by FIFA (International Federation of Football Associations) in Zurich. The other three are Dennis Bergkamp of Holland, Roberto Carlos of Brazil, and Sinidin Sedan of France. The winner's name is expected to be announced on January 12. FIFA has already declared Brazil as the 1997 "Team of the Year" while Yugoslavia has the distinction of pocketing most of the FIFA rankings.



Keep track of World Cup

Football fans all over the world are even now excited, because 1998 is the



year of the World Cup. FIFA announced the final schedule on December 6. Accordingly, Group A matches will begin on June 10, when Brazil takes on Scotland at Paris, and Morocco play Norway later that day at Montpellier. Group B matches will be kicked off when Italy meet Chile at Bordeaux, and Cameroon take on

Australia at Toulouse, on June 11. Group C and Group D matches begin on June 12, Group E on June 13, Group F and Group H the next day, and Group G on June 15. The final will come off almost a month later, on July 12, at Paris. The football fans amongst you may keep this in your scrap-book : the earlier winners were Uruguay in 1930 and 1934; Italy in 1938 and 1950 (World Cup matches did not take place during the Second World War); Germany (1954); Brazil (1958 and 1962); England (1966); Brazil (1970); Germany (1974); Argentina (1978); Italy (1982); Argentina (1986); Italy (1990); and Brazil (1994). Among these winners, only Uruguay did not qualify for the World Cup this year.

Sportsperson of 1997

This honour has gone to cricketer Saurav Ganguly, who has been very successful with both the bat and the ball last year. This all-rounder from



Calcutta showed his mettle in Toronto, then in Colombo, and later in the home series in Mumbai. In the Sahara Cup, played in Toronto, Canada, which India won against Pakistan 4-1, he scored 222 runs and took 15 wickets in the series. In the Test matches against Sri Lanka, Ganguly proved to be a consistent player, scoring three centuries, one of them in Colombo and the other two on Indian soil, besides a 99. The choice was made by the well-known magazine from Chennai, the *Sportstar*. One of the hot contenders for the title was the tennis star Mahesh Bhupati. The earlier winners were Sachin Tendulkar in 1994,

Viswanathan Anand (1995), and Leander Paes in 1996. The "Legend of Sport" award went to India's olympian star Milkha Singh, who came fourth in the 400 metres race in the 1960 Rome Olympics. In India, he is considered the greatest male track athlete of all time.

The magazine has chosen Rajeev Mishra as the 1997 Young Achiever. He played centreforward in the Indian



Junior Hockey team that won the final of the World Cup in England last summer.

First Black player

South Africa entered the cricket arena in 1888, but till recently, the South African team had only White players. Last November, for the first time, a black African was inducted into the team. He is 20-year-old Makhaya Ntini, of Dingi, a village in Eastern Cape Province. He had his coaching under Ali Bacher's development programme. The first major match Ntini played was in Australia - a one-day festival match against the Australian Cricket Board Chairman's Eleven in Perth. "It's a dream come true," said Ntini before he donned the country's colours.



★ **What is the currency of Poland ? What is its value in Indian currency?**

-Sanjay Kr. Tiwari, Tribeni

The name of the Polish currency is ZLOTY. The exchange rate is approximately Rs.40 to 1,000 zloty. Incidentally, the word means 'gold'.

★ **What is Shintoism ?**

-Jyotiranjana Biswal, Durgapur

The ancient religion of Japan was known as *Kami-no-Machi*, which the Chinese translated as Shinto. This Doctrine of the Gods believed in man's oneness with Nature and his loyalty to the reigning dynasty as having descended from the Sun-goddess called **Amaterasu-Omikani**. This religion was superseded by Buddhism from the 6th century onward. The Meiji rulers, who came to power around 1860, re-introduced the religion, which was followed by the people till its disestablishment after World War II, when the late Emperor Hirohito declared that no divinity should be attached to him. Modern Shinto has discarded these aspects, but the common Japanese people still holds Nature in great reverence.

★ **What is the chemical formula of tetracycline? For curing which diseases is it used?**

-Nityananda Sumani Bhadra, Pune

The formula is: $C_{22}H_{24}N_2O_8$. It is used as an antibiotic - a drug which kills bacteria and fungus or prevents their growth.

From our readers

Chandamama provides more knowledge in all respects. My request is, please add Quiz which the magazine once had.

- Vishnu Raj, Kasargod

Quiz does improve one's general knowledge. Chandamama has even now several features that provide general knowledge. Quiz will soon appear in a new format.—Editor.

In your September issue, the famous proverb appeared with an error: "Where ignorance is bliss, it is *fully* to be wise". The word should be 'folly'.

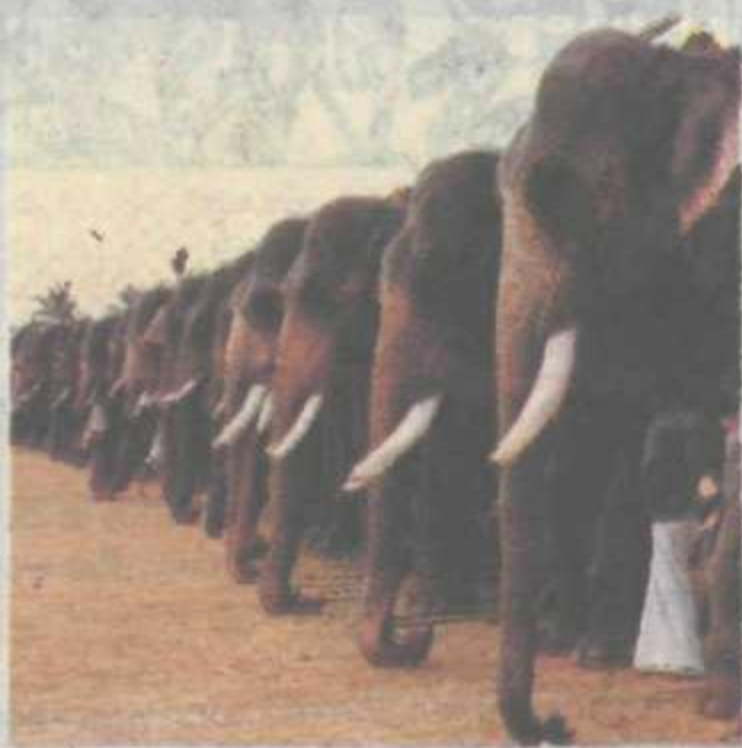
- Y. Murali Nath, Anantapur

It was a printer's devil! However, we're grateful to reader Murali Nath. —Editor

PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST



M.NATARAJAN



M.NATARAJAN

Can you formulate a caption in a few words, to suit these pictures related to each other? You may write it on an ordinary post card and mail it to Photo Caption Contest, Chandamama, Vadapalani, Madras - 600 026, to reach us by the 25th of the current month. A reward of Rs. 100/- will go to the best entry which will be published in the issue after the next.

The Prize for November 1997 goes to :-

C. Jayanthi

6, "Gurukripa" Plot No: 1258

19th Main Road, Anna Nagar

MADRAS - 40

The winning entry : "The Beauty and The Barbie"

CHANDAMAMA ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION RATE

Within India Rs. 72 by surface mail

Payment in favour of

DOLTON AGENCIES

Chandamama Buildings, 188 N.S.K. Salai, Vadapalani

Madras - 600 026.

THE MOST ENDEARING GIFT YOU CAN THINK OF
FOR YOUR NEAR AND DEAR WHO IS FAR AWAY

CHANDAMAMA



Give them the magazine in the language of their choice
Assamese, Bengali, English, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada,
Malayalam, Marathi, Oriya, Sanskrit, Tamil or Telugu
—and let them enjoy the warmth of a home away from home.

Subscription Rates (Yearly)

AUSTRALIA, JAPAN, MALAYSIA & SRI LANKA

By Sea mail Rs. 129.00 By Air mail Rs. 276.00

FRANCE, SINGAPORE, U.K., U.S.A., WEST GERMANY & OTHER COUNTRIES

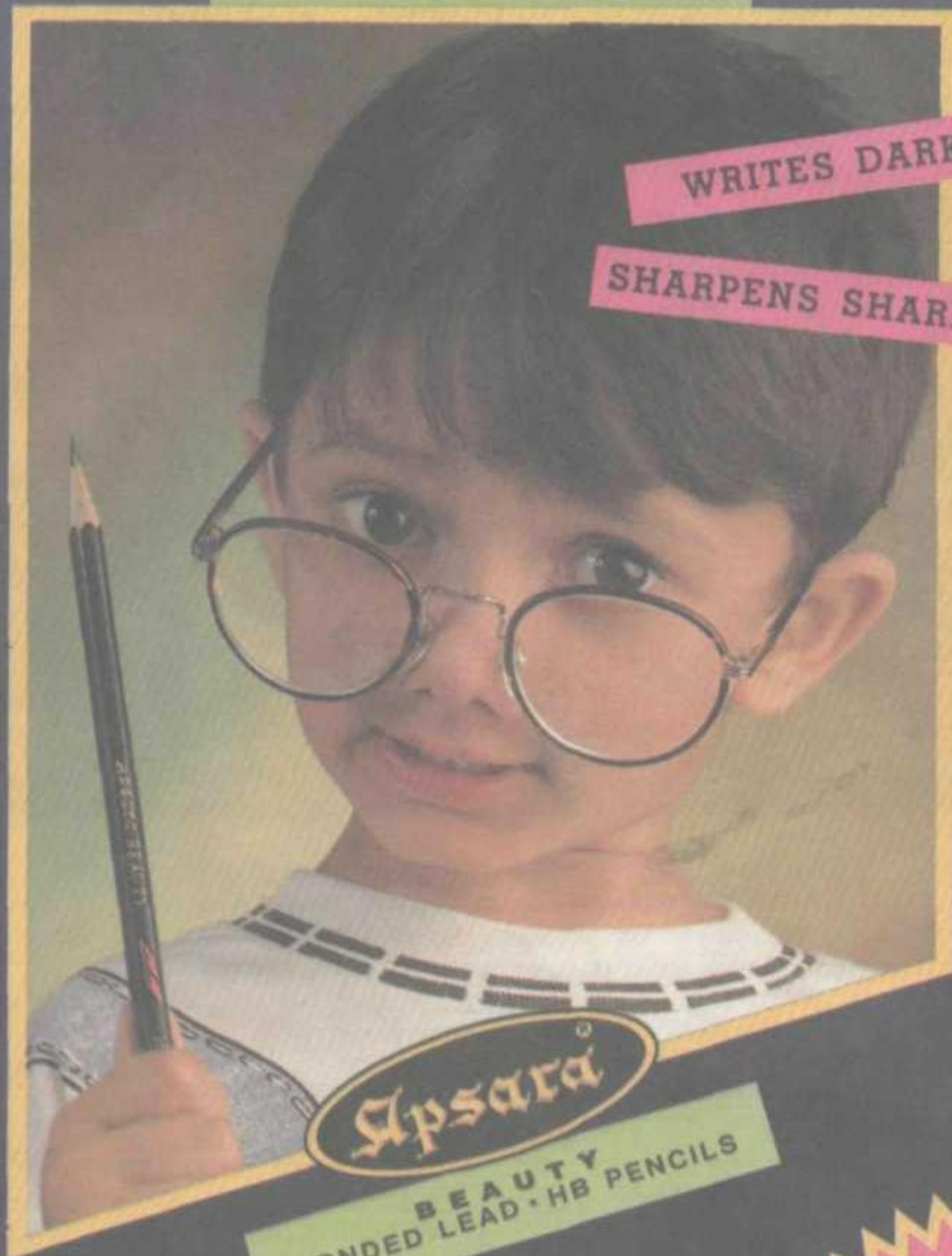
By Sea mail Rs. 135.00 By Air mail Rs. 276.00

Send your remittance by Demand Draft or Money Order favouring

'Chandamama Publications' to :

CIRCULATION MANAGER, CHANDAMAMA PUBLICATIONS, CHANDAMAMA BUILDINGS
VADAPALANI, MADRAS 600 026

TEACHER'S CHOICE



WRITES DARKER

SHARPENS SHARPER

Apsara

BEAUTY
BONDED LEAD - HB PENCILS



FREE

One Natural Press-Fit Sharpener
with every pack of
10 Apsara Beauty Pencils.
Offer open till stocks last.

QUALITY PRODUCTS FROM HINDUSTAN PENCILS LTD

